

THE WANDERERS

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"THE TOP OF THE MORNING TO YE, MR. JAGUAR."

THE WANDERERS

By
W. H. G. KINGSTON

THOMAS NELSON AND SONS

LONDON, EDINBURGH, DUBLIN
AND NEW YORK

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THE WANDERERS.

CHAPTER I.

OUR OLD HOME IN PENNSYLVANIA—REVERSE OF FORTUNE—ARRIVAL IN TRINIDAD—UNCLE PAUL AND ARTHUR FOLLOW US—SETTLED ON AN ESTATE—SUSPECTED OF HERESY—OUR MOTHER'S ILLNESS—DON ANTONIO'S WARNING—OUR MOTHER'S DEATH—THE PRIEST'S INDIGNATION—WE LEAVE HOME—ARTHUR'S NARROW ESCAPE.



WE lived very happily at the dear old home in the State of Pennsylvania, where my sister Marian and I were born. Our father, Mr. Dennis Macnamara, who was a prosperous merchant, had settled there soon after his marriage with our mother, and we had been brought up with every comfort we could desire. Uncle Paul Netherclift, our mother's brother, who was employed in our father's house of business, resided with us; as did our cousin Arthur Tuffnel, who had lately come over from England to find employment in the colony.

Our father was generally in good spirits, and never

appeared to think that a reverse of fortune could happen to him. One day, however, he received a visit from a person who was closeted with him for some hours. After the stranger had gone, he appeared suddenly to have become an altered man, his vivacity and high spirits having completely deserted him—while both Uncle Paul and Arthur looked unusually grave; and young as I was, I could not help seeing that something disastrous had happened. My fears were confirmed on overhearing a conversation between my father and mother when they were not aware that I was listening.

“We must start without delay. I must not allow this opportunity of retrieving my fallen fortunes to pass by,” I heard my father observe, as he pointed to a paragraph in a newspaper which he held in his hand. “The Spanish Government have passed an edict, permitting all foreigners of the Roman Catholic religion to establish themselves in the beautiful and fertile island of Trinidad, where they are to be protected for five years from being pursued for debts incurred in the places they have quitted. Now, if we can manage to get there in safety, my creditors will be unable to touch me, and I shall soon have the means of paying my debts and recovering the position I have lost.”

“But, my dear husband, it would soon be discovered that we are not Roman Catholics; and we should be placed in an embarrassing, if not in a dangerous posi-

tion, were we to do as you propose," observed my mother in a tone of expostulation. "You would not, surely, have us conform, even outwardly, to a religion in which we have no faith?"

"Depend on it, no questions will be asked, as it will be taken for granted that all persons settling in the island belong to the ordinary form of religion sanctioned by the Government," answered my father.

My mother sighed, for she saw that my father was wrong, and that, blinded like Lot of old by his desire to obtain worldly advantages, he was ready to sacrifice the religious principles he professed. I am compelled, though with much pain, to write this.

It was settled that we should start at once for Baltimore, to embark on board a vessel bound from that place to Trinidad. Uncle Paul and Arthur were to remain behind to arrange my father's affairs, and to follow us as soon as possible.

The only other person to whom my father made known his intentions, was Timothy Nolan, who had come out with him from Old Ireland, when quite a boy, as his servant.

"I must leave you behind, Tim; but you will easily find a far better situation than mine, though I shall be sorry to lose you," said my father, after telling him of his intentions.

"Shure your honour won't be after thinking that I would consent to lave you, and the dear young lady

and Master Guy, with no one at all at all to take care of them," answered Tim. "It's myself would be miserable entirely, if I did that same. It isn't the wages I'd be after asking, for to make your honour doubt about the matter. The pleasure of serving you in the days of trouble will be pay enough; only just say I may go, master dear, and shure I'll be grateful to ye from the bottom of my heart."

My father could not resist Tim's earnest entreaties, and so it was agreed that he should form one of the party.

It was a sad day for us all when we set out on that rapid journey southward in the waggon, without wishing good-bye to any one. Baltimore, however, was safely reached, and without delay we got on board the good ship the *Loyal Briton*, which immediately set sail.

My father seemed to breathe more freely when we were clear of the harbour. Our chief consolation was, that Uncle Paul and Arthur would soon rejoin us, as they expected to be ready for the next ship—to sail in about a month—and they would not have the difficulty in getting off which my father had experienced. It is a satisfaction to me to believe that, had they not been able to remain behind to make arrangements with his creditors, my father would not have left the country in the secret way he did; but the laws in those days were very severe, and had he not escaped, he might

have been shut up in prison without the means being allowed him of paying his debts, while we all should have been well-nigh reduced to penury. Had such, however, been the case, I am very sure that Uncle Paul and Arthur would have done their utmost to support my mother and Marian, while I might soon have been able to obtain employment. This is a subject, however, I would rather not dwell upon. Whether my father acted wrongly or rightly, it is not for me to decide; but I hold to the opinion that a man under such circumstances should remain, and boldly face all difficulties.

We had a prosperous voyage, and my father and mother appeared to recover their spirits. Marian and I enjoyed it excessively, as it was the first time we had been on the sea. We took delight in watching the strange fish which came swimming round the ship, or which gambolled on the waves, or the birds which circled overhead; or in gazing by night at the countless stars in the clear heavens, or at the phosphorescence which at times covered the ocean, making it appear as if it had been changed into a sea of fire.

At length we sighted the northern shore of the island which for a time was to be our home. As we drew near we gazed at it with deep interest, but were sadly disappointed on seeing only a lofty ridge of barren rocks rising out of the water, and extending from east to west.

"Shure it would be a hard matter to grow sugar or coffee on that sort of ground!" exclaimed Tim, pointing towards the unattractive-looking coast.

"Stay till we pass through the 'Dragons' Mouths' and enter the Gulf of Paria," observed the captain. "You will have reason to alter your opinion then, my lad."

We stood on with a fair and fresh breeze through the "Boca Grande," one of the entrances into the gulf, when a scene more beautiful than I had ever before beheld burst on our view. On our right hand appeared the mountains of Cumana, on the mainland of South America, their summits towering to the clouds; on our left rose up the lofty precipices of Trinidad, covered to their topmost height with numerous trees, their green foliage contrasting with the intense blue of the sky. The shore, as far as the eye could reach, was fringed with mangrove-trees, their branches dipping into the sea. Astern were the four entrances to the bay, called by Columbus the 'Dragons' Mouths,' with verdant craggy isles between them; while on our larboard bow, the western shore of the island extended as far as the eye could reach, with ranges of green hills intersected by valleys with glittering streams like chains of silver running down their sides, towards the azure waters of the gulf.

We brought up in Chagaramus Bay, the then chief port of Trinidad and the next morning we went on

shore at Port Royal; for Port of Spain, the present capital, was at that time but a small fishing-village. Several other vessels having arrived about the same time, there was much bustle in the place; and although numerous monks were moving about, no questions were asked at my father as to the religion he professed. It was, as he had supposed would be the case, taken for granted that we were, like the rest of the people, Roman Catholics.

He lost no time in selecting an estate at the northern end of the island, near the foot of the mountains, well watered by several streams, which descended from the heights above. A mere nominal rent was asked, and he had the privilege of paying for it by instalments whenever he should have obtained the means of doing so. Considering this a great advantage, he had sanguine hopes of success. He at once commenced a cacao plantation, of which some already existed in the island. It is a tree somewhat resembling the English cherry-tree, and is about fifteen feet in height, flourishing best in new soil near the margin of a river. It requires, however, shelter from strong sunshine or violent winds. For this purpose "plantain" or coral-bean trees are planted between every second row; and these, quickly shooting up above the cacao-trees, afford the most luxuriant appearance to a plantation, their long bare stems being contrasted strongly with the rich green of the cacao below. Nut-

meg, cinnamon, and clove plantations were also formed ; indeed, the utmost pains were taken to make the ground productive.

Some progress had been made in the work before the arrival of Uncle Paul and our cousin Arthur. They had been delayed longer than we had expected, and we were for some time anxiously looking out for them. We were consequently delighted when at length they appeared. Marian threw her arms round Arthur's neck, and gave him the welcome of a sister, for she loved him dearly.

Uncle Paul complimented our father on the energy he had displayed, and expressed his wonder that so much had been done.

"My success is mainly owing to the way in which I treat those whom I employ," he answered. "The natives especially flock here in numbers, and are more ready to labour for me than for anybody else in the neighbourhood."

With the assistance of Uncle Paul and Arthur, still greater progress was made. They also established a house of business in Port Royal, of which Uncle Paul took the chief management, while Arthur and I assisted. We exported numerous articles, and among other produce we shipped a considerable quantity of timber ; for magnificent trees, fit for ship-building and other purposes, grew in the island—the red cedar and several species of palms being especially magnificent. Alto-

gether, our house was looked upon as the most flourishing in the island, and, as might have been expected, we somewhat excited the jealousy of several of the native merchants. Our father, however, cared nothing for this, and dared the Spaniards to do their worst.

Necessity made Uncle Paul, Arthur, and me live, during the week-days, in the town, but we returned home every Saturday, where we received an affectionate welcome from my mother and Marian. It was, consequently, not remarked in the town that we did not attend mass; and as our house was at some distance from any church, we had a sufficient excuse for not going to one on the Sunday. We were aware, however, that the Inquisition existed in the island, though we could not ascertain who were the persons immediately connected with it. There were, we observed, in proportion to the population, a very large number of priests and friars, some of whom were constantly visiting the houses in the town and neighbourhood; but as we left our lodging at an early hour every day for the counting-house, and seldom returned till late in the evening, we had not hitherto been interfered with.

One Saturday evening we were returning homeward, when we overtook a friar ambling along on his mule. We saluted him in the customary fashion, and were passing on, when he stopped Uncle Paul by asking a question which took some time to answer. The friar then, urging on his beast, kept pace with us. Arthur

and I had dropped a little behind, so that we could only partly hear what was said, but enough of the conversation reached us to let us know that the friar was talking about religious matters, and was apparently endeavouring to draw out our uncle's opinions. He was always frank and truthful, so we knew that he would find it a difficult task to parry the friar's questions.

"I feel almost certain that the friar knew we should pass this way, and came on purpose to fall in with us," observed Arthur. "I wish that Uncle Paul had galloped on without answering him. I don't like the tone of his voice, though he smiles, and speaks so softly."

"Nor do I," I replied. "I only hope that he won't come and talk with us."

"If he does, we must give him short answers, and say that the matter is too deep for us," observed Arthur. "We may perhaps puzzle him slightly, and at the worst make him suppose that we are very ill informed on religious matters; but we must be cautious what we say."

Uncle Paul had from the first been endeavouring in vain to get ahead of the friar without appearing rude, but he did not succeed till the latter had got out of him all the information he wanted. The friar then allowed his mule to drop in between us, and at once addressed Arthur in a friendly way—inquiring of him how often he had attended mass since his arrival, and

who was his father confessor. Arthur replied that, as he spent every Sunday in the country, and was occupied the whole of each week-day in business, he had to confess that he had not paid due attention to such matters."

"And you," said the friar to me,—“are you equally careless?”

"I hope that I am not careless," I answered; "but we Englishmen are not brought up exactly like Spaniards, and consequently you may not understand us clearly."

"All true Catholics are the same," remarked the friar. "You may expect a visit before long from the Superior of my Order to inquire into your religious condition, which appears to me unsatisfactory. Good-day, young gentlemen; I cannot give you my blessing till I know more about you."

Bowing to the friar, who, having gained all the information he required, now reined in his mule, we rode on to rejoin Uncle Paul. Arthur laughed. "I think we have somewhat puzzled the old fellow," he observed.

"Depend upon it, though, that we shall before long receive the visit he promises from his Superior, who may manage by some means or other to find out the truth," I remarked.

Though Uncle Paul made light of the matter, too, I saw that he was not altogether comfortable about it.

As soon as we arrived, I told my father and mother and Marian, that they might be prepared.

"We must not be entrapped by him," said my father; "and I will show my zeal by offering to assist in building a chapel in the neighbourhood."

"I will not deny the truth," said my mother, with tears in her eyes.

"Nor will I," exclaimed Marian.

My father looked annoyed. "You must try then and keep out of the way of the man," he said. "I will manage him, should he come."

I afterwards had a conversation with my young sister. "It will be cowardly and disgraceful to deny our faith," she said. "Let me entreat you, Guy, not to do so, whatever may be the consequences. Our father is still unhappily blinded by the hope of securing worldly advantages, or he would not think of acting as he proposes. He may thus secure his own safety, and perhaps, for his sake, the inquisitors may not interfere with us; but if they do, let us pray that we may be firm. It is very, very, very sad, and will break our poor mother's heart, for she already feels dreadfully the position in which we are placed. Oh, what shall we do?"

"Trust in God," said Arthur, who just then came into the room, and had overheard Marian's last remark. "My uncle is undoubtedly wrong, and had I known before we left home the state of affairs in this island, and what we were to encounter, I would have implored him not to come to Trinidad; however, as we

are here, we must seek for guidance how to act should we, as I fear we shall, be questioned as to our religious belief."

We three talked the matter over, and determined, if questioned, to acknowledge ourselves Protestants, and refuse to attend the Roman Catholic Church. We felt sure that Uncle Paul would agree with us, and we proposed to get him to speak to our mother.

We were not disappointed in Uncle Paul's reply. He blamed himself greatly for having yielded to our father's persuasions, and consented to urge on our mother the duty of adhering firmly to her religious convictions.

On Monday morning, Uncle Paul, Arthur, and I set off to return to the city. On the way our uncle told us that our mother had solemnly promised him not to change her religion, and to suffer anything rather than be induced to do so. He had also spoken to our father, who seemed very anxious, but who declared that, rather than abandon his estate and the prospect of retrieving his fortunes, he would conform outwardly, if necessary, to the religion of the country; but that he would allow us, if we desired it, to quit the island.

We reached the town, and carried on business as usual, without any interference from the officials of the Inquisition.

We were about to leave our place of business on Wednesday evening, when Tim arrived with a message

from my father, summoning us home on account of the dangerous illness of my mother. We immediately ordered our horses and rode off, accompanied by Don Antonio, a physician of great repute, to whom our uncle, on receiving the intelligence, forthwith sent requesting his assistance.

We found, on our arrival, that our father, unhappily, had not been alarmed without reason. Our poor mother was dangerously ill, and the physician gave us but slight hopes of her recovery. He was necessitated to return at once to the town, but he promised to be back the next day.

Our mother rallied greatly, and when Don Antonio again appeared she seemed to be much better. He, however, looked so grave, that on his following Arthur and me into the sitting-room, we expected to hear him express an unfavourable opinion of her case. But after looking about to see that none of the servants were within hearing, he closed the door, and said in a low voice :—

“It is not on account of your mother’s health that I am anxious, but for your sakes, my friends. You are supposed to be rank heretics ; and I have received information that unless you forthwith attend mass, go to confession, and in all respects conform to the obligations of the Catholic faith, the Inquisition intends to lay hands on you, and to punish you severely as a warning to others. Even should your

father conform, he will be unable to shield you, and you will be equally liable to punishment. If you will be advised by me, unless you are prepared to adopt the religion of the country, you will, without delay, make your escape to some part of the sea-coast remote from the capital, where you may get on board a vessel bound to one of the neighbouring islands or elsewhere. You know not the fearful punishment to which you may be subjected, should you once fall into the hands of the Inquisition ; and though I myself run the risk of losing my liberty, not to speak of other consequences, by thus warning you, I could not find it in my heart to leave without doing so."

We warmly thanked our kind friend for the advice he had given us, and he repeated what he had said to our father, who shortly afterwards came into the room ; but at the time he made no remark, though he was evidently greatly agitated.

Scarcely had Don Antonio gone when my mother appeared to grow much worse ; and Arthur, throwing himself on horseback, galloped off as hard as his horse could go to bring him back. We anxiously waited his return with the physician, for every moment my mother grew worse and worse. How thankful we were when Don Antonio arrived ; but no sooner had he felt her pulse, than, calling my father out of the room, he told him that she was dying, and that he could do nothing for her. His words proved too true.

As we all stood round her bed, she entreated us to adhere firmly to the faith in which we had been brought up; then, desiring us to go out of the room, she had a conversation with my father—on the same subject, I suspect, for he seemed much moved when we again entered. As daylight streamed into the room, she breathed her last.

We all felt her loss greatly, and poor Marian was so overwhelmed with grief that we were in serious anxiety on her account.

In that latitude, burial rapidly follows death. It was a sore trial to us to see her carried to her grave, which had been prepared in a picturesque spot on the side of a hill not far from the house. Scarcely had the coffin been lowered into it, when two priests arrived to perform the burial-service. They appeared to be highly indignant that the funeral should have taken place without their presence, and, from expressions which they let drop, it was very evident that they looked upon us all as a family of heretics. My father tried to pacify them, however, and fancied that he had sent them away satisfied.

“Remember the warning I have given you,” observed Don Antonio, as he bade us good-bye. “Do not be deceived, even should the friars who may come here appear to be on friendly terms; their object will be to betray you.”

It had been arranged that Uncle Paul and Arthur

should return to the town and attend to business next morning, while I was to remain with poor Marian to try and comfort her.

Some time after dark, while we were all assembled in the sitting-room, there was a knock at the door, and Arthur went out to see who had come to visit us. He quickly returned with a note for my father in his hand, which he said Don Antonio had sent by his black servant. It contained merely the words, "Follow the advice I gave. It should on no account be put off till to-morrow."

The negro having been sent back with a verbal message to the effect that the prescription should be strictly followed, my father sat down, with Uncle Paul and Arthur, to consider what was to be done.

"For myself," he said, "I have resolved to remain. I cannot throw away the advantages I have gained; and circumstances, not my fault, will compel me to conform to the religion of the country. But you and Arthur may do as you think fit; and if you resolve to make your escape from the island, I will send Guy and Marian with you—and Tim also, if he wishes to go."

Uncle Paul expressed his sorrow at having to leave our father; but as he had determined not to change his faith, he said he was ready to set off with us immediately, and to try to carry out the plan Don Antonio had proposed.

Poor Tim, when he heard of our resolution, was sorely troubled what to do.

"If you remain, you must become a Roman Catholic with me," said my father.

"Then, your honour, with all respect to you, I'll be after going wherever Master Guy and Miss Marian go; though it will be a sad day that we have to leave you."

"It must be done, however," said my father. "Now go and get the horses ready. We will have such things as may be required packed up forthwith."

We had horses enough to mount the whole party, so arrangements were speedily made; and within half an hour after we had received Don Antonio's warning we were in the saddle, and, under the guidance of natives well acquainted with the country, were making our way along a narrow path up the side of the mountains which rose between our house and the sea.

Uncle Paul and the guides went first. Marian rode next, mounted on a small pony, and attended by Arthur. I followed them; and Tim brought up the rear. Our great object was to get to the sea-side, where we might remain concealed, in case the officials of the Inquisition should pursue us.

The narrow and steep path on which we were travelling wound its way up the side of the hill till the summit was reached, when we began to descend towards the sea. It was generally too rugged to allow us to move out of a walk, for our horses might have

fallen and sent us down a precipice either on one side or the other ; still, whenever the ground allowed it, we pushed on as fast as we could venture.

At length, after descending some distance, we found ourselves travelling along with the ocean on our left and the rugged sides of the hill rising on our right. The pathway seldom allowed two to ride abreast. Now it ran along scarcely eight or ten feet above the level of the water ; now it ascended to the height of eighty or a hundred feet, with a steep precipice below us.

Daylight had just broken, when, glancing over the ocean, I caught sight of a couple of vessels, which appeared to be standing in for the coast. I could not help crying out to Uncle Paul, in case he might not have observed them. My voice, unfortunately, startled Arthur's horse, which began to sidle and prance ; when what was my horror to see its hinder feet slipping over the precipice ! Marian shrieked out with alarm, and I expected the next moment that Arthur would be dashed to pieces on the rocks below. Such would have been his fate, had he not sprung from his saddle just as the animal went over the precipice. In vain the creature instinctively attempted to spring up again, desperately clinging to the rock with its feet. Arthur tried to seize its bridle to help it ; but in another instant we saw it fall on the rocks below with a force which must have broken every bone in its body.

So thankful did we feel that Arthur had been

preserved, that we scarcely thought about the poor horse.

“Go forward ! go forward !” cried out Arthur. “I’ll run on by Marian’s side. You must not be delayed on my account.”

We accordingly pushed on, and at length came to a part of the coast where the road ceased, and it was impossible to proceed further with our horses. Our chief guide—who, knowing that we had strong reasons for wishing to escape, was anxious to assist us—advised that we should send the horses back over the mountains by a different road from that by which we had come, while we continued along the coast till we reached a place of concealment, which he said we should find some way further on ; he himself proposing to accompany the horses, and to rejoin us when he had conveyed them to a place of safety, where the officials of the Inquisition were not likely to find them.

CHAPTER II.

OUR JOURNEY—THE PASSAGE OF THE STREAM—OUR FLIGHT DISCOVERED—
ARRIVAL AT THE RETREAT—OUR FIRST NIGHT IN THE WILDS—CAMO'S
ARRIVAL—THE SPIDER-MONKEYS—A CURIOUS SCENE—THE MONKEYS CROSS-
ING A RIVER.



WE had now a toilsome journey to perform, partly along the coast and partly inland, where the rocks which jutted into the sea were so precipitous that we were unable to climb over them. Still, though Marian was already much fatigued, we pushed forward, as it was of the greatest importance that we should reach a place of concealment before the officials of the dreaded Inquisition had discovered our flight. Even should they pursue us, and take natives with them as guides, we hoped that they might be deceived by our having sent the horses into the interior, and would follow their footsteps, supposing that we were still upon them, instead of continuing along the shore in the direction we were taking. The rocky character of the ground over which we passed after dismounting would, we believed, prevent any traces which even the keen eyes of Indians could discover, and we were careful not to

break any branches or twigs as we passed along. When on the sea-shore, we kept either in the water or on the hard sand, which the tide, as it rose, would soon cover. But as we thus proceeded along the shore, or climbed over the rocks, where we could obtain no shelter from the sun's rays, we found the heat at times almost overpowering.

To relieve Marian, Uncle Paul and Arthur joined their hands and insisted on carrying her between them. She soon begged to be put down, however, as she saw that the task much increased their fatigue.

Having reached the north-eastern end of the island, the rocky range of mountains which extends along the northern shore terminated, and we entered a region covered with a dense and tangled forest. Uncle Paul and Tim had brought their guns and some ammunition with them, that we might kill game when the small stock of provisions we had been able to carry was exhausted. The larger portion of these provisions, with some cooking utensils, had been placed on the backs of the horses, and our native guides had promised to bring it on to us as soon as they had left the steeds in a place of safety. We were, however, likely to be somewhat badly off in the meantime ; and as a considerable period might elapse before we could get on board a vessel, we should probably have to depend on our own exertions for obtaining a fresh supply. The two vessels we had seen when we were on the side of the mountain had

tacked and stood away from the island, so that we had to abandon the expectation of getting on board either of them.

I could not help expressing my doubts about the fidelity of the Indians; but Uncle Paul, who knew them better than I did, was convinced that they were honest, and would follow us as soon as they had secured the horses in a place of safety.

We were now travelling southward along the coast, and at some little distance from the shore. We had the mountains rising above us on the right, while the lower ground was covered with a dense vegetation, through which it was often difficult to force our way. At length we reached a small river, the most northern of several which ran into the ocean on the eastern side of the island. Our guides had told us that we should find a secure place of concealment on the banks of another stream about a couple of miles beyond this, but without their assistance we had little hope of discovering it. However, we were unwilling to wait, and accordingly prepared to cross the river; Tim volunteering to go first, in order to ascertain the depth. We watched him anxiously. He sank deeper and deeper, till the water reached his arm-pits, and we began to fear that we should be unable to carry Marian over without wetting her. Still Tim went bravely on, feeling his way with a long stick which he carried, till once more he began to get higher and higher out of

the water, and soon reached the opposite bank in safety. Unable, however, to divest myself of the idea that there might be sharks, or even alligators, in the river, I, imitating Tim's example, cut a long pole, which would enable me to defend my companions while they were crossing. Uncle Paul and Arthur then took up Marian and placed her on their shoulders, putting their arms round each other's necks to support her. Tim then waded back to meet them; while I went behind, beating the water furiously with my stick, so that no alligator or shark would have ventured near us. My uncle and Arthur, being both of good height, were able to keep Marian out of the water, and we happily got across without any accident. She then insisted on being put down, declaring that she was not tired, and could walk as well as any of us.

Nearly the whole day had been spent on the journey, and we were anxious to find a place where we could rest. Had it not been for the somewhat exposed position, we would gladly have stopped on the banks of the river; but Uncle Paul thought it wiser to continue on till the natives should overtake us.

Evening was approaching, and it would soon be dark, when, looking back along the forest glade through which we had come, we saw a person running towards us; we quickly made him out to be Camo, one of the native guides. He signed to us not to stop, and as he ran much faster than we could, he soon overtook us.

"Hasten on," he exclaimed; "we are not far from the place to which I wish to lead you. Already your flight has been discovered, and the alguazils are searching for us."

"If they come, I will be after giving them a taste of my shillalagh," exclaimed Tim, flourishing the thick stick he carried.

"It will be far better to hide ourselves than to oppose them," observed the guide, in his peculiar dialect, which I cannot attempt to imitate.

He went ahead, while Uncle Paul and Arthur helped on Marian between them, Tim and I bringing up the rear; Tim every now and then looking back and flourishing his stick, as if he already saw our pursuers, and was resolved to give them a warm reception. Though very tired, we made rapid progress; Camo guiding us through a part of the forest which we should have been unable to discover by ourselves.

Just as the shades of evening were stealing amid the trees, we caught sight of the glimmer of water before us, and Camo led the way up a steep ascent to the right, amid the trunks of trees, through between which often only one person could pass at a time; and we soon found ourselves in a small open space, so closely surrounded by dense underwood that it would have been impossible for any one to discover us, unless acquainted with the spot. Above us a precipitous hill rose to a considerable height; while the branches of

the trees, joining overhead, would completely shut us out from the sight of any person looking down from the hill.

"Here you will be perfectly safe, for there is no other path besides the one by which we have come," said Camo. "I will go back, however, and so arrange the branches and creepers that the sharpest eyes among our pursuers will be unable to discover that any one has passed this way."

An opening towards the east admitted the only light which reached the spot. Through it we could see the sea, from which we were not far distant. Uncle Paul expressed himself perfectly satisfied with the place of concealment which Camo had selected, and declared that he had little fear of our being discovered.

Weary as we were, we were thankful to throw ourselves on the ground; and after we had eaten some of the provisions we had brought with us, we sought that rest we so much required. The wind being completely excluded from the place, it was almost as warm as inside a house, and we had no need of any covering. As our shoes and stockings were wet, however, we took them off and hung them up on the trees to dry, rather than sleep in them.

Uncle Paul had placed Marian by his side, and allowed his arm to serve as her pillow. Poor girl, it was only now that, all cause for exertion being for the

present over, she seemed to feel her sad bereavement, and the dangerous position in which we were placed. Her grief for a time prevented her from closing her eyes ; but at length, overcome by fatigue, she dropped into a peaceful sleep. I sat for some time talking to Arthur ; while Tim insisted on standing sentry at the entrance of the passage till the return of Camo, who had gone to look after his companions. We had great difficulty in keeping awake, and even Tim found it a hard matter not to drop down on the ground ; but a sense of duty triumphed over his natural desire for rest, and he kept pacing up and down with his stout shillalagh in his hand, ready to do battle with any foes, either human or four-footed, which might approach our retreat. We also kept the guns ready, not to defend ourselves against our pursuers, for that would have been madness, but to shoot any wild beast which might approach us.

"It's as well to be prepared," observed Arthur. "But though there are jaguars and pumas on the mainland, I am doubtful whether they exist in Trinidad."

"I have heard that most of the animals on the opposite shore of South America are to be found in this island," I answered. "Both the jaguar and puma steal silently on their prey ; and if one of them were to find us out, it might pounce down into our midst before we were prepared to defend ourselves. It will not do to risk the chance of there being no such ani-

mals in the island. Should we arrive at the conclusion that there are none, I should be very sorry to find, by positive proof, that we were wrong."

"Well, at all events, we will act on the safe side," observed Arthur. "It is wise to be prepared, even though we may find that our care has been unnecessary."

An hour or more might have passed, when we heard a rustling in the neighbouring bushes. Arthur and I started to our feet, and Tim clutched his shillalagh more firmly. We listened. The sound came from the bottom of the path leading up to our hiding-place. We waited in perfect silence, for it was too dark to observe anything; but presently our ears caught the sound of light footsteps approaching, and, much to our relief, we heard Camo's voice.

"All right!" he exclaimed. "The alguazils have turned back, afraid of trusting themselves to this part of the country in the dark. We may now all rest in quiet, for no one is likely to come near us—for some hours, at all events."

This was satisfactory, and honest Camo and his two followers assured us that they would keep the necessary watch while we rested. Scarcely had a minute elapsed after this when Arthur and I were fast asleep; and I suspect that Tim was not long in following our example.

Daylight streaming through the opening in our

woody bower towards the east, aroused us from our slumbers. We were all very hungry, for we had taken but a small amount of food the previous evening; but we were afraid of lighting a fire, lest the smoke might betray us, should our enemies by any chance be in the neighbourhood. We were obliged to content ourselves, therefore, with our cold provisions, and a draught of water, which Camo brought from the neighbouring stream. Marian somewhat recovered her spirits, but we all felt very anxious about my father, and wondered how he might be treated when the inquisitors found that we had made our escape.

The district we had reached was wild in the extreme; the footsteps of civilized men appeared never to have reached it, and the natives who once had their quiet homes in this part of the country had long since been carried off to labour for the ruthless Spaniards, who had already destroyed nearly nine-tenths of the original population. Our native attendants, from the kind way in which my father had treated them, were warmly attached to us, and proportionately hated the Spaniards, and we knew that we were perfectly safe under their care.

We were afraid of moving out during the day, though Camo and the other natives made several exploring expeditions, and at length came back with the satisfactory intelligence that our pursuers were nowhere in the neighbourhood. They brought also a

couple of ducks which they had killed with their arrows; and they assured us that there would be no danger in lighting a fire to cook them. We soon gathered a sufficient supply of broken branches and twigs to begin with; and while the natives were collecting more fuel from the neighbouring trees, and blowing up the fire, I sat down to pluck one of the ducks—Uncle Paul, with Arthur and Marian kneeling by his side, watching the process. We quickly had the ducks roasting on spits before the fire, supported by two forked sticks stuck in the ground. With these, when cooked, and some hot tea which was made in a tin kettle Tim had brought with him, with a small quantity of sugar which he had put up, as he said, for the young mistress—though we had no milk to drink with it—we made an excellent supper. It was a scene which to our eyes, unaccustomed to anything of the sort, was wild in the extreme; but we were destined to become acquainted with many even wilder and more romantic. That night was passed much as the preceding one had been, except that we were able to keep up a fire without the fear of betraying our retreat.

Next morning, having left Marian in her bower, with Tim, armed with one of the guns, to keep guard, I accompanied Arthur—who carried the other gun—into the woods in search of game. Uncle Paul meanwhile went down to the sea-shore to look out for any vessel

which might be approaching the coast; intending, should she prove to be English, to make a signal, in the hope that a boat might be sent on shore to take us off. We caught sight of him in the distance during our ramble, but as we looked seaward we could make out no vessel on any part of the ocean over which our eyes ranged.

“Not much chance of getting off to-day,” I observed.

“Nor for many days, probably,” answered Arthur.

“The chances are against any vessel coming near enough to this exact spot to see us; so we must make up our minds, I suspect, to remain here for some weeks, or perhaps months, to come. However, the life may not prove an unpleasant one; and, at all events, it will be far better than being shut up in the dungeons of the Inquisition.”

“I should think so, indeed,” I said. “And if I knew that my poor father was safe, I should not care, but rather enjoy it; and so, I am sure, would Marian.”

We made our way down to the bank of the river, which appeared to be broad and deep, and thickly shaded on both sides by trees. Knowing that all the rivers in Trinidad abound with fish, we regretted that we had neither spears, nor rods and lines, with which we might easily have caught an ample supply. Arthur, however, made good use of his gun, and soon shot a number of birds; among which were several parrots with flaming scarlet bodies, and a lovely variety of

red, blue, and green on their wings. Loaded with the results of our sport, we returned to the encampment, which by this time afforded us more comfort than at first.

Uncle Paul, with the aid of the natives, had been busy at work erecting a small hut, or rather an arbour, for Marian ; and they had also formed a bed-place for each of us, raised off the ground, and roofed over with palm-leaves. Uncle confessed that he could not tell when we might get off, and that it would be wise, for the sake of our health, to make ourselves as comfortable as we could. We might indeed remain where we were in safety, for if the inquisitors had given up the search for us, they had probably done so under the belief that we had already made our escape from the island.

Camo and the other natives had during the day made a wide circuit without meeting with any one, and they were more than ever convinced that our enemies were not likely to search for us in that neighbourhood. Uncle Paul was much inclined to send back to ascertain the fate of our father ; but Camo declared that the risk would be very great, as in all probability a watch would have been set on the house, and whoever went would be traced back to our hiding-place. So the idea was accordingly abandoned.

We sat round our camp-fire in the evening, and discussed all sorts of plans. Arthur proposed that we

should move further to the south ; Camo recommended that we should remain where we were. The district was thinly populated, and we might range for miles through the woods without meeting with any one.

“But how are we to procure provisions?” asked Arthur.

“Our guns, as you have proved, will furnish us with an abundance of game,” I answered. “The woods will afford us fruit, and we can do very well without bread or any luxuries. I shall always be ready to act as sportsman for the camp.”

“And I should like to accompany you,” said Marian. “My eyes are very sharp ; and I might be able to see the birds and animals, which you could then shoot.”

From the report given to us by our faithful Indians, we had no longer much fear of being discovered. We felt sure, also, that should we be seen by any of the natives, they would not betray us to the hated Spaniards. We agreed that we would go out the next morning, Arthur taking one gun and I the other, while Marian was to accompany me. Uncle Paul was too eager in watching for a vessel, willingly to leave the coast. Tim was to keep watch at the camp ; and the natives were to act the part of scouts, so that we might have timely notice should the Spaniards approach the wood—in which case we were to hurry back to our place of concealment, where we had no fear of being discovered.

The night passed away much as the former ones had done. On the following morning, Arthur, Marian, and I set out after breakfast, with the expectation of amply replenishing our larder ; but as our supply of ammunition was small, we determined not to fire unless we could make sure of our game. I had not gone far, when I caught sight of a large parrot with beautiful plumage. I fired, and brought it to the ground. Though badly wounded and unable to fly, it pecked fiercely at Marian when she ran forward to pick it up. However, a blow which I gave it with the butt of my fowling-piece soon brought its struggles to an end. I afterwards killed three others in the same manner.

We made our way on till we caught sight of the river below us ; but, hoping to meet with more birds near it, we descended to the bank, and were making our way in silence through the thick jungle, which greatly impeded our progress, when Marian exclaimed,—

“O Guy! what can that creature be, hanging to yonder bough?”

We both stopped, peering ahead, when I caught sight of the animal of which Marian spoke. It looked like an exaggerated spider, with its enormously long arms, its equally long hinder legs, and its still longer tail, by which it was swinging from a branch overhanging the river. Suddenly it threw itself round, and caught the branch by its fore paws. Just then

turning its head, it caught sight of us. Probably this was the first time it had ever seen any human beings,—or, at all events, civilized people with white skins. Uttering loud shrieks, the monkey—for a monkey it was—sprang to the end of the branch, when, in its terror, it let go its hold, and plunged into the water. I should, I confess, have shot the creature; for I knew that the natives, and indeed many of the white inhabitants, of Trinidad, eat monkey flesh, though we had never had any on our table.

Away the creature went, floating down the stream, and shrieking loudly for help. Its cries were answered by a number of its kind, of whom we caught sight in the branches directly above our heads. Without noticing us, they ran to the end of a long bough, which extended far over the water. Immediately one of them threw itself off, and caught with its fore paws a long sepo, or vine, which hung from the branch; another descended, hanging on with its tail twisted round the tail of the first; a third sprang nimbly down the living rope, and allowed the second to catch hold of its tail; while a fourth came down, immediately afterwards, almost as quick as lightning, the third catching hold of its tail and one of its arms, while its other arm reached down to the surface of the water, so that when its drowning companion came by it was able to grasp it and hold it tightly. The first now, with wonderful power of limb, hauled itself up,

dragging the four monkeys hanging to it, till the second was able to grasp the vine. They then hauled away till the other monkeys in succession were drawn up, and the one which had been in the water was placed safely on the bough. The whole operation was carried on amid the most terrible howlings and cries, as if the creatures, all the time that they were performing this really heroic act, were suffering the greatest possible pain. The chatterings, shrieks, and cries continued after they were all seated on the bough,—convincing us that the monkey which had tumbled into the water was telling its companions about the strange creatures it had seen; for they all cast eager glances around and below them, peering through the foliage, evidently endeavouring to catch a sight of us. Though I could have shot one of them, I could not bring myself to do so after seeing the way they had behaved. Presently they saw us, and one glance was sufficient; for, renewing their shrieks and cries, they sprang up the vines, like sailors swarming up ropes, and quickly disappeared amid the dense foliage. Still, we could hear them chattering away in the distance, and I have no doubt that they were communicating their ideas about us to each other, and all the monkeys they met.

Having remained perfectly silent, we presently saw a little dark head, with bright eyes, looking out at us from among the boughs; then another, and another

came ; and as we did not move they gained courage, and crept nearer and nearer. They looked so comical that Marian could not help bursting into a fit of laughter, in which I joined ; but no sooner did the monkeys hear our voices than off they scampered to the end of a bough which stretched a considerable way across the stream. They now, almost with the rapidity of lightning, formed a chain similar to the one they had made to drag up their companion, and began swinging backwards and forwards, each time approaching nearer the opposite shore. At last the monkey at the end of the chain caught, with his outstretched arms, a bough extending from that side, and then climbed up the trunk, dragging his companions after him, till the whole hung like a festoon across the river, or rather like a rope-bridge, for a bridge it was. A whole tribe of monkeys now appeared upon the bough on our side, and began to cross by the living bridge thus formed, chattering and shrieking as they ran till they reached the opposite bank. There were old monkeys, and mother monkeys with little ones on their backs, and young monkeys of all sizes. I observed that some of the latter gave a slight pinch, as they went along, to the backs of the big fellows, who could not, of course, retaliate. Probably the rascals took this opportunity of revenging themselves for the sundry beatings they had received for their misconduct on various occasions.

When the whole tribe had passed over, with the exception of the living chain, the monkey holding on to the upper bough on our side let go, while those who had hitherto been holding on by the opposite lower branch began rapidly to scramble up the tree, so that the brave old fellow who had borne for the whole time the weight of his companions was for a minute in the water. Once safe, the whole of them scampered away amid the boughs, uttering loud shrieks, and apparently well satisfied at having placed the river between themselves and us. We stood watching them, laughing heartily at their strange proceedings. Curiosity, however, soon again gained the victory over their fears, and they came back, peering at us amid the foliage; while we could see the young ones running up and down the vines, and playing all sorts of antics. We forgot, for the moment, our grief, and the dangerous position in which we were placed.

These monkeys are known by the name of "ateles," or "spider-monkeys;" and certainly their long thin arms and legs, and longer tails, greatly resemble the legs of spiders.

They continued to watch us, but did not recross the river, being evidently satisfied that they were safe on the further side; though, had I been anxious, I might easily have brought down one or two of them. Marian, however, charged me not to fire; indeed, it would

have been almost like murder to have killed such apparently intelligent creatures.

After watching them for some time, we turned our steps towards our retreat; and as we made our way through the forest, I added several more birds to our stock of provisions.

CHAPTER III.

JOSE APPEARS—INTELLIGENCE OF OUR FATHER—HIS ARRIVAL—CATCHING THE
MANATEE—SEARCH FOR A BOAT—JOSE'S TREACHEROUS DESIGN FRUSTRATED
BY AN ANACONDA.



WE had already spent a week at our retreat, and no opportunity had as yet occurred of making our escape. So far as we could tell, we might live on where we were for many months without being discovered, if we could provide ourselves with food. That, of course, was a very important point. We might kill animals enough to supply ourselves with meat; but we required flour and vegetables, and our small stock of tea and sugar was diminishing. We had also made Marian's hut tolerably comfortable, and the rest of the party were content to sleep in the open air. Thoroughly trusting our faithful Camo, we consulted him as to the possibility of obtaining fresh supplies from home, especially of such things as Marian chiefly required. He answered that he would do everything we wished, but he again warned us of the danger we might incur of being discovered.

"Oh, do not let any risk be run for me!" exclaimed Marian. "I would infinitely rather go without any luxuries, than feel that our friends had to incur any danger to obtain them. All I wish to ascertain is, how poor papa is getting on."

"We will wait, at all events," said Uncle Paul. "If we find that no vessel approaches the coast, we must try and obtain a boat from the shore. It will not be safe, however, to go off in her without an ample stock of provisions and water, as some days may pass before we succeed in getting on board a vessel to carry us to the mainland or to one of the islands."

Our chief object for the present was, therefore, according to Uncle Paul's advice, to obtain the provisions he thought necessary; while every day, as before, Camo and the other natives went out to watch for the approach of those who might be sent in search of us.

One evening one of the two men came back reporting that all was safe, but Camo had not returned. Arthur and I had gone some little distance from our retreat, with our guns, when we caught sight of a person among the trees stealing towards us. We were convinced, by the cautious way in which he approached, that it was not Camo. We accordingly concealed ourselves; for had we retreated, the stranger would probably have observed us. As he drew nearer to us, we were convinced, by the way he looked about in every direc-

tion, that he by some means or other knew we had taken refuge in the neighbourhood. When he stopped at length, a short distance off, we recognized one of my father's servants—a half-caste named José. He was not a man in whom we had ever placed much confidence, though he was an industrious, hard-working fellow; and we were, therefore, doubtful whether we should speak to him, or endeavour to keep concealed. Still, we were both anxious to gain tidings from home; and we thought it probable that my father had sent him with a message for us. It was evident, indeed, that he must have known whereabouts to find us, or he would not have come so directly towards our hiding-place. Arthur put his mouth to my ear, and whispered,—

“It will be better to show ourselves; and we must afterwards keep a watch on the man, to prevent him from going off and giving information to our enemies.”

I, of course, agreed to this proposal; so, stepping out from behind the tree where we had been hidden, we faced José, and asked him whether he had brought any message from my father. He seemed in no way astonished at seeing us, but replied that he was glad to find we had not left the island, as he had been sent expressly by my father to try and meet with us. He had been, he said, searching for us for some days; and at length catching sight of Camo, he knew that we were not likely to be far off. My father himself.

he said, was in considerable apprehension of being denounced to the Inquisition, as he had received a warning from Doctor Antonio, and had thought it prudent in consequence to hide himself.

"Will he not join us?" asked Arthur eagerly. "He will be safer where we are than anywhere else."

"He does not know where to find you, señors; but if you will show me your place of concealment, I will try and find him, and bring him to you."

Arthur looked at me, on hearing this, with an expression that showed he doubted the truth of what José said. "It will be better not to show any distrust," he whispered; "at the same time, it might be hazardous to lead José to our retreat."

"What are we to do, then?" I asked.

"We will tell him to go and find your father, and conduct him to this spot: if he comes, we need no longer have any doubts about José's fidelity."

I thought Arthur's idea a good one, though we should have liked to consult Uncle Paul on the subject.

Arthur asked José how long it would take to bring our father to the spot where we then were. He replied, "Certainly not before noon of next day;" and we accordingly agreed to meet him at that hour.

"But will you not take me to your hiding-place?" he asked. "I am hungry and weary, and require rest and refreshment."

I was much disposed to do as the man requested, but I waited to hear what Arthur would say before replying.

"We regret that we cannot take you there at present," said Arthur; "others are concerned as well as ourselves. Do you go back and find your master, and tell him that we are well, and shall be rejoiced to see him."

José looked somewhat disappointed.

"Come," said Arthur, "we will accompany you a part of the way. Here are two birds which we have shot; they will help to support you and Señor Dennis till you reach this to-morrow."

Still José lingered, evidently wishing to learn the way to our retreat; but Arthur had a determined manner about him, and José was at length compelled to turn back, whereupon we accompanied him.

We walked on for about half a mile through the forest, but were unwilling to go further, for fear of losing our way. At length we bade José good-bye, and hurried back, occasionally looking behind us to ascertain whether he was following. It was dark by the time we reached our retreat. Camo had just before come in, and, strange to say, had not seen anything of José. Uncle Paul approved of what we had done, but expressed his doubts as to whether José was honest.

"We shall know to-morrow," he observed. "If he

is accompanied by your father, all may be right ; but if not, we must take care that he does not discover our retreat. Having themselves failed to find us, the officers of the Inquisition are very likely to have bribed him ; and they may possibly have let your father escape their clutches, for the sake of catching us all in one net."

So impressed was Uncle Paul with this idea, that he proposed we should move further south, to some other safe place of concealment. Consulting Camo on the subject, the Indian replied that we could not hope to find a safer retreat than our present one, and suggested that he and his companions should be on the watch, some distance in advance of the spot to which we had told José to bring my father ; promising that, should he be accompanied by strangers, they would immediately hasten to inform us, so that we might have time to escape.

I earnestly hoped that my father would come ; for, though he might run the risk of sacrificing his property, that would be far better than having to act the part of a hypocrite, or being shut up in the dungeons of the Inquisition.

The night seemed very long ; and I could scarcely go to sleep for thinking of what might happen on the morrow. At the hour appointed, Arthur and I went to the spot agreed on ; Camo and the other natives having some time before set out to watch for José's approach.

We waited anxiously ; the hour for the meeting had arrived. At length we caught sight of two persons coming through the forest. My heart bounded with joy ; my father was one of them, and José was his companion. Arthur and I hurried towards them, and were soon welcoming my father. He looked pale and ill, but expressed his thankfulness at having escaped ; so we at once accompanied him to our retreat, followed by José.

He was, as might be expected, very much cast down, and anxious about the future ; but Uncle Paul did his utmost to raise his spirits, bidding him trust in God, and reminding him that everything would be ordered for the best. Our plans for the future were then discussed, as our father was eager to get off as soon as possible. As we spoke in English, José could not understand what was said ; but he observed everything that took place with a look which I did not like—indeed, neither Arthur nor I were yet satisfied that he was acting an honest part.

The means of obtaining provisions for the voyage next occupied our attention. Camo suggested that we should try and catch a cow-fish, the flesh of which, when cut up into strips and dried in the sun, could be preserved for a considerable time, and would prove more serviceable than any other food we were likely to obtain. He offered at once to go down to the river and look out for one. Arthur, Tim, and I ac-

accompanied him and the two other natives. Tim had an axe, while we had our guns, and the natives had provided themselves with lances, to which long lines were attached. Camo took his post on the lower branch of a tree which projected over the water, while we stationed ourselves at some little distance, ready to render him assistance, if required ; and we waited thus for some time, looking up and down the stream in the hope of seeing a cow-fish come within reach of his lance.

The creature of which we were in search is amphibious, and suckles its young like the whale. It is frequently found in pairs with its young, browsing on the marine plants, and sometimes on shore in the cocoa-nut groves. It is properly called the "manatee," or sea-cow ; measures fifteen feet in length, has two fin-like arms, is covered with hair, and often weighs twelve hundred pounds. I had never seen one, but Camo had described it to us as we were on our way to the river.

At length we caught sight of a dark object coming slowly up the stream ; its head, as it approached, greatly resembling that of a cow, while its hairy body was raised considerably above the water. We knew from Camo's movements that he also had observed it. The question was whether or not it would pass near enough to him to allow him to strike it with his lance. As it drew nearer, we saw that it had a young one by

its side. Now, greatly to our disappointment, it floated off to the opposite side of the stream, and we feared that it would be lost. It suddenly turned again, however, while its young one disappeared beneath it. For some time it remained almost stationary, then, unconscious of its danger, floated directly under where Camo stood. At that instant his long lance flew from his hand, and buried itself deep in the animal's back. The other natives, who had been watching eagerly, now sprang forward and hurled their lances, fixing them firmly, one in its neck, and another towards its tail. The creature, finding itself wounded, began to plunge violently, but made no other effort to escape. It seemed, however, as if the light lances would be unable to hold it. Arthur and I on this made our way as close to the water as we could; and when we got the creature clearly in sight, Arthur fired, and sent a bullet through its head. Its struggles instantly ceased, and without much difficulty we drew it up to the only part of the bank in the neighbourhood where we could land it. It was quite dead, but even then it required our united strength to drag it on shore. The young one followed, and tried to climb up the bank, when Tim despatched it with a blow of his axe. It seemed a cruel deed, but necessity, in such a case, has no law, and we were thankful to have obtained such an ample supply of meat.

We at once set to work to cut up the creature,

under Camo's directions, and soon had loaded ourselves with as much meat as we could carry. Leaving one of the natives to guard the carcass from the birds of prey, or any animals which might come to feed on it, we hastened back to our retreat, and then returned for a further quantity. Uncle Paul was delighted at our success ; and we immediately set to work to cut the meat into thin strips, which we hung up in the sun. In the evening we cooked a portion of the young manatee for supper, and we all agreed that it tasted like the most delicate pork.

We had now a supply of meat sufficient to last us for several days ; and we hoped, with the aid of some cocoa-nuts, yams, plantains, bananas, and other fruits, to secure an ample supply of provisions for the longest voyage we were likely to take. Our hope was that we should quickly get on board a vessel. If not, Uncle Paul proposed that we should steer for Tobago, which we might expect to reach in a couple of days.

Our chief difficulty was to obtain a boat ; and Uncle Paul and Arthur agreed to set out to the south in search of one. Dressed in duck trousers, and with broad-brimmed hats on their heads, they would probably be taken for English sailors, and would not be interfered with. They hoped to hire a boat without difficulty ; if not, they intended to run off with one, and to send back more than her value to the owner. Under the circumstances, they considered that they would be

justified in so doing ; though I am very sure that we must never do what is wrong for the sake of gaining an advantage of any sort.

I may be excused, however, from discussing here the morality of their intended act. The world certainly would not have blamed them ; but, as I now write in my old age, I have learned that there is a rule far above the world's laws, and that says, "Do no wrong, or be guilty of any appearance of wrong, however important may seem the object to be gained." But this is a digression.

Camo and the two other natives agreed to accompany our uncle and Arthur. The latter took his gun with him, but I retained mine.

They had been gone for some hours, when Tim and I agreed to go out into the woods and kill some birds for supper, whilst our father—who had not yet recovered from the fatigue of his journey, and was, besides, sorely distressed at the thought of all his hopes being destroyed—remained in the retreat with Marian. José undertook to stop and prepare the meat, which was to be packed up tightly in small bundles, and covered over with leaves.

Tim and I took our way westward. I scarcely know what made us go in that direction ; for before we left the camp we had intended to proceed to the river, and had said so in José's hearing. We had gone some distance, however, when we caught sight of

a small deer known as the "mangrove stag." The creature did not perceive us, and we followed it for a considerable distance before I could get a favourable shot. At length, when we were little more than fifty yards off, I fired, and, greatly to my satisfaction, brought it to the ground. Tim having quickly despatched it, next skinned and cut it up; then loading ourselves with as much of the flesh as we could carry, we set off to return to the camp.

We had made some progress on our way home—though with our load we moved but slowly—when we caught sight of José in the distance, running rapidly among the trees of the forest. At the same moment an object appeared directly in front of José sufficient to fill us with horror. It was a huge snake. José apparently had not seen it; for the next instant the creature seized him, and began to wind its folds around his body. He uttered a dreadful shriek of terror, not knowing that any one was near. Tim and I rushed forward; he with his axe in his hand, I with a stick I had picked up—for I was afraid, should I fire, of killing the man. José had never been a favourite with Tim; indeed, he had suspected him from the first; and the man's appearance at that spot showed pretty clearly that Tim was right in his opinion. He now, however, dashed up to the huge snake in the most gallant way, and struck it a violent blow on the tail, almost severing the end. Still the monster kept firm hold of the terri-

fied José, whose fearful shrieks were each instant becoming fainter as the creature pressed his body tighter and tighter in its encircling folds.

“Do you, Master Guy, batter away at its tail, while I take its head,” cried Tim ; and springing towards the neck of the monster, just as it was on the point of seizing José’s head in its mouth, he struck it a blow with his axe which well-nigh cut it through. Still it kept hold of the wretched man ; till Tim repeating his blow, it rolled over to the ground with its victim, who, covered with its blood, presented a horrible spectacle as he lay gasping for breath. The blows had paralyzed the serpent ; and now, seizing José by the shoulders, we dragged him out from between its relaxed folds. We had expected to find every bone in his body broken, but, except that his breath had nearly been squeezed out of him, he did not appear to have suffered much. The anaconda, however, we saw from the movements of its body, still retained sufficient vitality to be mischievous.

“We must finish off this gentleman before we attend to Master José,” cried Tim. “If he comes to life again, he will be after taking us all three down his ugly mouth, like so many pills, at a gulp.”

“I suspect the gash you gave him must have somewhat spoiled his digestion, though, Tim,” I observed.

“Arrah, then, I will be after giving him another, to make sure,” exclaimed my companion, severing the

snake's head at a blow. "There! now I've done for him!" he cried, triumphantly holding up its head.

We measured the anaconda, which was fully thirty feet long; and Tim having cut it open with his axe, we found the body of a young deer, and three pacas, each larger than a hare, perfectly entire, showing that the creature had only just swallowed them. Its appearance was most hideous, the creature being very broad in the middle, and tapering abruptly at both ends. It had probably come up a small stream which ran into the main river, and which passed at no great distance from the spot where it had attacked José.

I was not before aware that anacondas of any size were to be found in Trinidad; indeed, Camo had told us that he had never seen one, and that at all events they were very rare.

We now turned our attention to José, who had not yet recovered from his terror. He sat moaning on the ground, and feeling his limbs, as if still uncertain whether or not they were broken. We at length got him on his legs, and taking him to the water, washed off the serpent's blood, which abundantly besprinkled his face and shoulders.

"And now, José, tell me, where were you going when the serpent stopped you?" I asked, when he had recovered sufficiently to speak.

"Oh, don't ask me, Señor Guy! I will go back

with you, and remain faithful to the end of my days."

I thought it best not to put further questions to the man, intending to leave it to my father to do so ; but I strongly suspected that had not the anaconda put a stop to his proceedings, we should not have seen him again. Indeed, I may say that I was certain he was on his way to give information to the Inquisition of our place of concealment.

Assisting him along, we reached our sylvan home just as darkness set in. My father looked sternly at José, and asked where he had been going. The wretched man, falling on his knees, then acknowledged his intended treachery, and, begging my father to forgive him, said he would be faithful in future.

"I will trust you thus far," said my father : "you must never leave this retreat while we remain here."

José made no answer, but, sitting down on the ground, groaned as if in great pain. Indeed, the anaconda had given him a greater squeeze than we had at first supposed.

"You may depend on it, your honour, that I will keep an eye on our friend here," said Tim, glancing at José. "If it had not been for the big serpent, he would have been after getting those 'Inquisitive' gentlemen down upon us. I will make my shillalagh and his head wonderfully well acquainted, however, if I catch him trying to bolt again."

After this discovery of the intended treachery of our servant, we felt more anxious than ever to escape from the island ; and we eagerly looked for the return of Uncle Paul and Arthur, with the boat we hoped they would find.

CHAPTER IV.

UNCLE PAUL'S RETURN—WE EMBARK—OVERTAKEN BY A FURIOUS GALE—OUR PROVISIONS WASHED AWAY—JOSE'S DEATH—BURIAL AT SEA—OUR SUFFERINGS—A BREEZE—A SAIL—DISAPPOINTMENT—CATCHING FISH.



NOTHER day passed, and we became more and more anxious for the return of our uncle and cousin. Sometimes our father talked of going back and braving the worst; and sometimes he seemed eager to embark, to get clear away from the island in which his once bright hopes had been so completely destroyed. Frequently he spoke as if all happiness in life for him was over, and seemed only to wish for death as an end to his sorrows. He felt greatly the loss of our mother; and that alone would have been sufficient to cast him down. But he was also, it was evident, dissatisfied with himself. How could it be otherwise, when he reflected that he had, by his own act, brought his present misfortunes upon himself? We, however, did not and could not complain; and dear Marian did her utmost to soothe and comfort him, telling him in a quiet way to trust in God, and that all would be well.



"But I have not trusted in God; I have only trusted in myself," answered our father bitterly, "and I have, in consequence, been terribly deceived."

Though neither Marian nor I could offer sufficient consolation, we did all we could to keep him from going back, and were thus, at all events, of use.

Several times during the day I went down to the beach and looked along the shore, in the hope of seeing the boat coming; but neither did she appear, nor was any sail in sight. Tim would not leave his post, even for the sake of getting some birds for our larder, but kept guard upon José; who, it was evident, he thought would run off should he find an opportunity.

"If once we get on salt water, the spalpeen may go and give all the information he chooses; though it would be a pity to let him show this snug little hiding-place, in case some other honest folks might wish to take possession of it," he said to me. "I should just like to take him with us, if I wouldn't rather be without his company."

We had been for some time shut up in our retreat that night, with the entrance carefully closed. Marian had retired to her hut, and our father to one we had built for him; José was lying asleep, or pretending to be so; while Tim sat up with me, it being my watch,—when we heard a slight sound, as of persons approaching the spot. The fire was burning brightly, so that we could easily have been seen by those who

might find their way to the entrance. My anxiety was relieved, however, by the voice of Uncle Paul; and he soon appeared, followed by Arthur and Camo.

"We have no time to lose," he said, after he had inquired if all had gone well. "We have been able to purchase a boat; and though she is not so large as I could wish, she will carry us all. We have brought her down to the mouth of the river, where she is moored in safety; also some casks of water, and all the provisions we have been able to procure. We should embark at once, so as to be away from the land before morning dawns."

Our father, who had been sleeping lightly, awoke on hearing Uncle Paul's voice, and he seemed well satisfied with the arrangements which had been made. "I am perfectly ready to start, and shall rejoice to get away from this unhappy country," he added.

I awoke Marian, who was equally ready to start; and we at once set to work to pack up all the provisions we had collected. With these we loaded ourselves, José taking one of the heaviest packages.

"You will accompany us," said my father to him. "If you have the regard for me you profess, you will willingly go; and should we hear favourable accounts of the progress of events in the island, you will be able to return, should you wish it."

"It is my wish to obey you, señor," answered José. "Had it not been for Señor Guy and Tim, I should

have been killed by that dreadful serpent ; and I am thankful to them for saving my life."

"Notwithstanding all he says, I will keep an eye on him," whispered Tim to me. "If he tries to give us leg-bail, I will be after him, and show him that I have as good a pair of heels as he has."

We were quickly ready ; and having extinguished the fire, to prevent the risk of it spreading to the forest, we all set out,—Camo leading the way, Arthur assisting Marion, while Tim and I brought up the rear.

"Stop a moment," said Camo, when we all got outside. "I will close the entrance, so that no strangers may find it." Putting down his load, he drew together the bushes amid which we had passed, as had been our custom from the first.

We walked in silence through the wood till we got down to the sea-shore, when, continuing along it for nearly a mile, we at length reached a little harbour formed by a bay at the mouth of the river. Here we found the boat, with the two natives guarding her. She appeared, indeed, very small for the long voyage we contemplated, though sufficiently large to hold all our party. Uncle Paul was the only seafaring person among us, for in his early days he had been a sailor ; but my cousin and I, as well as Tim and José, could row, so that should the weather prove calm we might still be able to make good way.

Camo and the other two natives would willingly have accompanied us ; but it not being necessary for them to leave the island, as there was but little danger of their being captured provided they kept concealed, my father and uncle had agreed that it would be better to leave them behind. They shed tears as they assisted us to load the boat and bade us farewell.

The oars were got out, and Uncle Paul gave the order to shove off ; then, getting her head round, we pulled down the river. There was but little wind, and that was off the shore, so that the water at its mouth was perfectly smooth. Bending to our oars, we pulled out to sea ; and as we left the shore astern, we all breathed more freely than we had done for many a day. We had, at all events, escaped from the dreaded Inquisition, and we thought, in comparison, but little of the dangers before us. Having got some distance from the shore we felt the breeze come stronger, and Uncle Paul desired us to step the mast and hoist the sail, when we glided much more rapidly through the water than we had done when rowing. The weather, too, promised to be fine, and Uncle Paul cheered us up by saying that he hoped we should fall in with a vessel during the morning ; if not, he proposed steering a course for Tobago.

The boat was pretty well loaded with provisions and water, so that there was not much space for lying down. We managed, however, to fit a small cabin for

Marian in the after-part with a spare sail, into which she could retire to rest. The task of navigating the boat fell most heavily on Uncle Paul, as neither Arthur nor I were accustomed to steer, while Tim and José knew nothing about the matter. Uncle, therefore, did not like us to take the helm.

We glided on till the shores of the island could scarcely be perceived,—the weather having been remarkably fine ever since we had left home. Just before dawn, however, there were signs of it changing; and as the sun rose from its ocean-bed it looked like a huge globe of fire, diffusing a ruddy glow throughout the sky, and tinging with a lurid hue the edges of the rapidly gathering clouds. The wind came in fitful gusts for some time from the westward; but soon after Uncle Paul had put the boat's head to the north, it suddenly shifted, and began to blow with considerable violence from that quarter. We had then, under his directions, to close-reef the sail; but even thus it was more than the boat could bear. In vain did we try to beat to windward.

"We shall make no way in the direction we wish to go," said Uncle Paul at length. "We must either run before it, or stand back to the coast we have left, and try to enter some river or harbour where we can find shelter till the gale has passed."

My father was very unwilling to return to the island, fearing that we should be suspected by the

authorities of any place where we might land, and be delivered into the hands of the government.

We were now steering to the southward, in a direction exactly opposite to what we wished, but the sea had got up so much, and the wind blew so violently, that it was the only one in which the boat could be steered with safety. The more the sea got up, the more necessary it became to carry sail, to avoid being swamped by the heavy waves which rolled up astern.

Poor Uncle Paul had now been steering for some hours, but he could not trust the helm to any one else. The wind continuing to increase, a stronger gust than we had before felt struck the sail. In an instant both it and the mast, which had given way, were carried overboard; and before we could secure them, they were lost. On this, Uncle Paul ordered us to get out the oars, and to pull for our lives. We did as he directed; but notwithstanding our efforts several seas which rolled up broke into the boat, carrying away all our water-casks and the larger portion of our provisions. While Arthur and Tim rowed, my father, José, and I, aided by Marian, set to work to bail out the boat, and it was with the greatest difficulty we could keep her clear.

Our position had now become extremely critical. Uncle Paul kept as calm as at first, directing us what to do; but I knew by the tone of his voice that he had great fears for our safety. Indeed, had the gale

continued to increase, no human power could have saved us. Providentially, after the last violent blast it began to subside; but the sea was still too high to allow us to make headway against it. As soon as we had somewhat cleared the boat of water, José and I resumed our oars; but, notwithstanding all our efforts, the summits of the foaming waves occasionally broke aboard, and we had to recommence bailing.

We were thus employed when Uncle Paul cried out, —“Take to your oars! Pull—pull away for your lives!” We did our utmost, but the top of another heavy sea, like a mountain, which rolled up astern, broke aboard and carried away nearly the whole of our remaining stock of provisions; and had not Uncle Paul at the moment grasped hold of Marian, she also would, I believe, have been washed away. Another such sea would speedily have swamped us. We, of course, had again to hail away with all our might; but it took some time before the boat could be cleared of water. When we at length got her to rights, and looked round for our oars, we found, to our dismay, that both José’s and mine had been carried overboard, thus leaving only two with which to pull on the boat; while we had only the small sail which had formed the covering to Marian’s cabin.

The gale continued for two days longer; and it seemed surprising that my young sister, poor girl, should have survived the hardships she had to endure.

One small cask, only partly full of water, remained, with two packages of dried manatee flesh, and a few oranges and other fruits,—which were, besides, fast spoiling. Uncle Paul served them out with the greatest care; giving Marian, however, a larger portion than the rest of us—though he did not tell her so, lest she should refuse to take it. Our poor father lay in the bottom of the boat, so prostrated, that had we not propped him up and fed him, he would soon have succumbed. José was in even a worse condition. He evidently had not recovered from the injuries he had received in the coils of the anaconda; and when I asked Uncle Paul if he thought he would recover, he shook his head.

“He will be the first among us to go,” he answered in a most dispirited way.

José was groaning, crouched down in the bows of the boat. Tim’s compassionate heart was moved; he went and placed himself by his side.

“Cheer up,” he said. “We may fall in with a vessel before long, when we shall have plenty of grub, and you will soon get all to rights.”

“No, no!” groaned José; “my doom is fixed; it serves me right, for I intended to betray you for the sake of the reward I expected to receive. I am dying—I know it; but I wish that I had a priest to whom I might confess my sins, and die in peace.”

“Confess them, my friend, to One who is ready to

hear the sinner who comes to Him—our great High Priest in heaven,” answered Tim, who, like most Irish Protestants, was well instructed in the truths of Christianity. “Depend on it, all here are ready to forgive you the harm you intended them; and if so, our loving Father in heaven is a thousandfold more willing, if you will go to Him.”

José only groaned; I was afraid that he did not clearly understand what Tim said, so Arthur endeavoured to explain the matter.

“God allows all those who turn to Him, and place their faith in the all-perfect atonement of His blessed Son, to come boldly to the throne of grace, without the intervention of any human being,” he said.

“I see! I see!” said the dying man. “What a blessed truth is that! How dreadful would otherwise be our fate out here on the ocean, without the possibility of getting a priest to whom to confess our sins.”

I, of course, give a mere outline of what I heard, and cannot pretend to translate exactly what they said. José, however, appeared much comforted.

The wind had by this time entirely gone down, and the sea was becoming smoother and smoother. At length night came on. José still breathed; but he was speechless, though I think he understood what was said. Either Arthur or Tim sat by him, while Marian and I supported our father. Uncle Paul, overcome by fatigue, had gone to sleep. Just as the sun

rose, José breathed his last. Our father, who had slept for some time, by this time appeared greatly refreshed ; and after he had taken some food, a little water, and an orange, he was able to sit up, and we began to hope that he would recover. We did not tell him of José's death, but soon his eye fell on the bow of the boat. "God is indeed merciful, to have spared me. I might have been like that poor man," he observed.

We waited till Uncle Paul awoke, to learn what to do, and he at once said that we must bury poor José. I sat with Marian in the stern of the boat, while Uncle Paul and Tim lifted José's body up to the side ; and the latter fastened a piece of stone, which served as ballast, to his feet. Our uncle having uttered an earnest prayer that we might all be preserved, they then let the corpse drop gently into the water, where it quickly disappeared beneath the surface. It was a sad sight, and poor Marian looked on with horror in her countenance. I wished that she could have been spared the spectacle.

Our stock of provisions and water would now last us scarcely a couple of days, and no land was in sight. Uncle Paul calculated, however, that we must be some fifteen or twenty leagues to the south-east of Cape Galeota, the most southern point of Trinidad. The brown colour of the water also showed that we were off the mouth of the mighty Orinoco, though probably many leagues away from it. Had we pos-

sessed our full strength and four oars, we might in time have reached the shore ; but, weak as we were, and with only a couple of oars, we could have but little hope of doing so. We still trusted to falling in with a vessel ; but as we gazed round over the glittering surface of the ocean, not a sail appeared. While the calm lasted, none indeed could approach us ; and too probably, before a breeze would spring up our scanty stock of provisions might be exhausted.

“ Cheer up, my friends ; let us still trust in God,” said Uncle Paul at length. “ It is wrong to give way to despair. There’s One above who watches over us, and orders all for the best.”

“ Let us pray to Him, then,” exclaimed Marian, kneeling down ; and following the example of the dear girl, we lifted up our voices together for safety and protection.

We all felt comforted, and even our poor father’s countenance looked less downcast than before. That which weighed most on his spirits was, I suspect, the thought that he had been the cause of our being placed in our present position. No one, however, uttered a word of reproach, and we all did our utmost to console him. Arthur tried to speak cheerfully : Tim attempted to sing one of the melodies of his native land which he had learned in his boyhood ; but his voice broke down, and he was well-nigh bursting into tears.

The calm, though very trying, enabled us to obtain

the rest we so much required ; and the next morning, though suffering from hunger, Uncle Paul was quite himself again.

After we had offered up our prayers, we took our scanty breakfast of water and a small piece of dried meat, with such parts of the rotten fruit as we could eat. Uncle Paul then stood up and looked about him. " We shall have a breeze, I think, before long," he said, "and we must at once prepare the sail. I am sorry, Marian, to deprive you of the covering of your nest ; but we have no other means of making the boat go along."

"I shall be thankful to give it up, if it will help on the boat," she answered, assisting to undo the lashing which secured the sail. It was old, and already torn, but with a strong breeze it would afford such canvas as the boat could carry. We had only an oar for a mast, and another for a yard. Uncle Paul stepped the first, and stayed it up carefully with such pieces of rope as could be found in the boat, while he joined two or three together to form a sheet.

"We are now all ready for the breeze when it comes," he observed, having finished his work. "I cannot say much for the appearance of our sail, but we may be thankful if it enables us to reach a port in safety." He went and sat down again in the stern-sheets, resting his hand on the tiller, so that not a moment might be lost after the breeze should reach us.

“Here it comes!” he exclaimed at length. “But I wish it had been from any other quarter. We may, however, hope to beat up against it, if it proves light, as I expect.” He pointed to the north-west, where a dark blue line was seen extending across the horizon, and rapidly approaching, every instant becoming broader and broader. Now some cat’s-paws came blowing over the ocean, rippling it up into mimic waves; now they disappeared, now again came on, till the whole surface was crisped over by the breeze. Our small triangular sail bulged out, sending the boat along about a couple of miles an hour.

Uncle Paul was standing up, looking in the direction from which the wind came, when he exclaimed, “A sail! a sail! She is coming from the northward, and must be bound either up the Orinoco, or to some port in the northern part of the continent.”

Arthur and I looked eagerly out, but we could just see a small patch of white rising above the horizon, which the eye of a sailor alone could have declared to be the topmost sails of a vessel. We stood on in the direction we were going, hoping to cut her off before she passed to the southward of us. How eagerly we watched her!—now gazing at her, now at Uncle Paul’s countenance, which betrayed the anxiety he felt. By degrees her canvas rose above the horizon, and we saw that she was a schooner, under all sail, running rapidly through the water, and directly crossing our course.

It soon became evident that we could not by any possibility cut her off, but we might be seen by those on board. At length she came almost ahead of us. Tim stood up and waved eagerly, and we all shouted at the top of our voices. We also attempted to fire our guns, but so wet were they that they would not go off.

“Oh, let us pray!” cried Marian; and she and I knelt down.

Still the schooner stood on. No eye on board was turned towards us. We must have presented, indeed, but a small speck on the wide ocean. Tim now waved violently, but all our shouting and waving was of no avail. Uncle Paul then kept the boat away, to obtain another chance of being seen; though, of course, there was no hope of overtaking the fast-sailing schooner.

“God’s will be done!” at length cried Uncle Paul. “We are only running further and further out of our course. We must hope that another vessel will come by, and that we may be seen by those on board. If not, while the wind holds as it now does we must endeavour to reach the northern part of Guiana.”

Though Uncle Paul said this, I could not help reflecting that our provisions would not hold out to keep us alive till then. For myself, I felt more hungry than I had ever before done in my life, and dreadfully thirsty; and I feared that Marian was suffering even more than I was, though she did not complain. I was careful,

however, to say nothing to increase her alarm, though I mentioned my fears in a whisper to Arthur, as we were seated in the bows of the boat.

"I do not despair altogether," he answered. "We may very likely, before long, be visited by birds, which, as we have our guns, we may be able to shoot; or, should a calm come on, possibly some flying-fish may leap on board, or we may be able to catch some other fish. Perhaps we may even be able to manufacture a hook and line."

"What a fortunate idea!" I exclaimed. "I have got a file in my knife; and we may be able to find a nail, to which I can put a barb, and bend it into the proper shape."

We lost no time in putting the idea just started into execution. We hunted about, and fortunately discovered a long thin nail of tough iron, which I thought we could bend into the shape of a hook. I told no one what I was about, however, but at once began filing away so as to form the barb, the most difficult part of my task. Arthur, meantime, recollected that he had on a pair of strong thread socks; so, undoing the upper part, he produced a long line, which when doubled was of sufficient strength to bear a pretty strong pull. By the time I had prepared my hook, greatly to my satisfaction, his line was ready. It was not so long as we should have liked, but still long enough to allow the bait to sink sufficiently below the

surface to attract the unwary fish. Tim, in the meantime, had been cleaning our guns, the locks of which, not having been covered up, had prevented their use at the moment they were so much required. We reloaded them, and put in fresh priming.

Uncle Paul having noticed what we were about,—“That is right,” he observed. “We are bound to make every effort to preserve our lives. While we put full trust in God, He will favour our efforts.”

The wind was again dropping, and the time, we thought, was favourable to commence fishing. We had to sacrifice a small piece of manatee flesh, but we trusted that it would give us a satisfactory return. So, having baited our hook, and put some lead on the line, we dropped it into the water, letting it tow astern. Never did fisherman hold a line with more anxious wish for success than did Arthur. He had not long to wait.

“I have a bite!” he exclaimed in a tone of eagerness. “Hurrah! it’s hooked!”

Carefully he drew in the line, while Tim and I leaned over the side, to lift up the expected prize, for fear that it might break away at the last moment. It was a fish nearly two feet long; and it fortunately struggled but little, or I believe that it would have carried away the hook. How eagerly we clutched it!—literally digging our fingers into its flesh—and then with a jerk brought it safely aboard. We none of us knew its

name; but as it was of the ordinary fish-like shape, we hoped that it would prove to be of a species fit for human food.

"I wish we had a kitchen-fire at which to cook it," cried Marian.

"We must manage to do without that," observed Uncle Paul; "and we shall not be the first folks who have been thankful to obtain raw fish for dinner."

It is my belief that that fish saved our lives. Even Marian managed to eat a small portion, which was beaten up fine to enable her to swallow it. Strange to say, it was the only one we caught, though we had the line out for several hours afterwards. We were afraid of allowing it to remain unless one of us held it, lest some large fish, catching hold of it, should carry away the hook. We therefore hauled it in at night; and, it being calm, Arthur took the helm, while Uncle Paul lay down to sleep.

CHAPTER V.

SHIP AHOY!—RESCUED—THE KIND SKIPPER—ENTER THE ORINOCO—THE HURRICANE—TWO MEN OVERBOARD—WRECKED ON A TREE—AN ANXIOUS QUESTION—A CURIOUS SCENE—WE OBTAIN FOOD—QUACKO, OUR NEW FRIEND.



UNCLE PAUL had charged Arthur and me to call him should there be the slightest change in the weather. The wind, however, continued very light, and the boat glided forward, as well as we could judge, steering by the stars, towards the point we desired to gain. I kept my eyes about me as long as they would consent to remain open, though it was often a difficult task. Several times I was nodding, when Arthur aroused me with his voice. It must have been about midnight, when, looking astern, I saw a dark shadowy form gliding over the surface of the ocean. I rubbed my eyes, supposing it to be a thing of the imagination; but there it was, not many cable-lengths off, coming up towards us.

"See! see, Arthur! What can that be?" I cried out.

"A sloop or a small schooner!" he exclaimed.

We at once called up Uncle Paul.

"Can she be a vessel sent in chase of us?" I asked.

"No fear of that. It could never have been supposed that we had got so far south; and they would not know in which direction to look for us," he answered.

Still I could not help having some doubts on the subject.

"We will hail the stranger, and learn what she is," said Uncle Paul; so, uniting our voices, we shouted out, "Ship ahoy! ship ahoy!"

A voice replied, in Dutch; and my father, who understood the language, at once cried out,—“Heave-to, for the love of Heaven, and receive us on board!”

“Ya, ya,” was the answer; “we will be up with you presently.”

In a few minutes we were alongside the stranger, a small Dutch trading-sloop. As soon as we were all on board our boat was dropped astern, and sail was made. Her skipper, Mynheer Jan van Dunk, gave us a kind reception, exhibiting the greatest sympathy when he heard of the sufferings we had endured, and seeming especially moved at hearing of those Marian had gone through.

“I have one little maid just like her,” he said, taking her in his arms. “She must go into my berth and sleep while we get supper ready. Poor little dear, she has had no food for so many days.”

"Thank you, I am not so very hungry," said Marian; "but I am very thirsty."

"Well, well, then, we will get you some tea ready," he answered. "Peter," he cried to his mate, "get a fire lighted in the caboose. Quick, quick, now; they all want food—I see it in their looks."

The skipper said this while we were seated round the table in his little cabin, pretty closely packed, as may be supposed.

"We want water more than anything else," said Uncle Paul.

"Ya, ya; but we will put some schiedam into it. Water is bad for starving people."

Peter quickly brought in a huge jug of water, but the skipper would not allow him to fill our tumblers till he himself had poured a portion of schiedam into each of them. "There now," he said, "there will no harm come to you."

Never had I taken so delicious a draught. It certainly had a very beneficial effect, and we set to with a will on some cold salt beef, sausages, and biscuits, which the kind skipper placed before us. By the time we had finished the viands we were quite ready for a fresh supply of liquid. Peter then brought in a large pot of hot tea, which perhaps really refreshed us more than anything else. Captain Jan had not forgotten Marian. All this time he had kept supplying her, till she assured him that she could eat and drink no more.

After we had taken all the food we required, the skipper and his mate arranged the cabin to enable us all to sleep with as much comfort as possible. My father was put into the mate's berth, Uncle Paul slept on the after-locker, Tim and Arthur on either side, and I on the table. I should have said that Captain Jan's crew consisted of his mate Peter, another Dutchman, a black, and two Indians. Worn out with fatigue as we were, we all slept on for several hours, and when we awoke our first impulse was to ask for some food, which, thanks to the honest mate, was quickly supplied to us. As the cabin was on deck, and the door and scuppers were kept wide open, though small it was tolerably cool; and we felt, after being so long cooped up in the boat, as if suddenly transported to a luxurious palace. Captain Jan looked in on us very frequently, and did not appear at all to mind being turned out of his cabin, but, on the contrary, exhibited a genuine pleasure in attending to our wants.

By the evening Marian was quite herself again, and wished to get up and go on deck; while our father was certainly very much better. He also wanted to get up, but the skipper insisted that he should remain quiet till his strength was perfectly restored. My father and Uncle Paul had been so prostrated mentally as well as physically, that it did not occur to them to ask where the vessel was bound to, nor had the captain asked us where we wished to go.

Captain Jan was exactly what I had pictured a Dutch skipper—short, fat, and fond of a drop of schnapps, and fonder still of his pipe. He was kind-hearted and good-natured in the extreme, and was evidently pleased with the thought that he had been the means of saving our lives. His mate Peter was in appearance very unlike him: tall and thin, with a melancholy expression of countenance; which, however, belied his natural disposition, for he was really as merry and kind-hearted as the skipper.

Arthur, Tim, and I went on deck for a short time, and found the sloop slipping pretty quickly through the water; but I cannot say that we took a “turn” on deck, for there was very little space to enjoy more than a fisherman’s walk, which is three steps and overboard. We soon returned to the cabin to have supper, which Sambo the black, under Peter’s supervision, had exerted all his skill to cook. It was not of a refined style of cookery, but we enjoyed it as much as if it had been the most magnificent banquet. We had not yet made up for our loss of sleep, so once more we all lay down in the little cabin, the kind skipper and his mate still refusing to occupy their own berths.

Next morning, when I went on deck, I found that it was a perfect calm. After breakfast the oars were got out; and as none of us wished to be idle, we offered to take our turn with the rest. I should have said that the vessel belonged to Stabroek, Guiana, then a Dutch

settlement. After having visited Trinidad, she was on her way up the Orinoco to trade with the natives. Had my father and Uncle Paul known this, they would certainly have requested the skipper to carry us to Stabroek.

"I am afraid that we put you much out of your way, eat up your provisions, and keep you out of your cabin," said Uncle Paul to Captain Jan.

"Oh no, no, my friends," answered the honest skipper. "I am glad of your company, and that little girl has won my heart; so, if you are pleased to remain, we will just run up the river for a week or two, and when we have done some trading with the natives I will carry you to Stabroek, or wherever else you may wish to go. We shall have no difficulty in obtaining provisions and water, and I have still a good store of schiedam, so, my friends, you will not starve, you see."

Although my father and Uncle Paul would much rather have landed at once, they could not insist on the skipper going out of his course, and they accordingly agreed to his proposal.

We had been rowing on for some time, the calm still continuing, when I saw Peter the mate eagerly looking out ahead. Springing up on heel of the bowsprit, he cried out, "Land ho! We shall soon be within the mouth of the river."

"Faith, it's curious land now," exclaimed Tim.

“My eyes can only make out a row of bushes floating on the top of the sea.”

“We shall find that they are pretty tall trees, by the time we get near them,” observed Peter.

All hands now took to the sweeps, and made the sloop walk through the water at the rate of three or four miles an hour. Still the current, which was running out pretty swiftly, would have prevented us from entering, had not a breeze sprung up. Sail was made immediately, and at length we found ourselves entering one of the many mouths of the mighty Orinoco, with mangrove-covered islands on either side. There was nothing either picturesque or imposing in the scenery, except the great width of the river. As we advanced, however, we caught faint glimpses of high mountains rising to the southward. Not a sail dotted the vast expanse, but now and then we saw native canoes paddling close to the wood-covered shore, though none of them came near us. The intention of our skipper was not to delay longer at the mouth of the river than to obtain provisions, but to proceed at once some hundred miles or so, to the district where the natives with whom he proposed trading resided. We had to keep the lead going, with a bright look-out ahead, to prevent the risk of running on any of the numerous shoals and sand-banks which impeded the navigation; and at length darkness compelled us to bring up and furl the sail, for it would have been dan-

gerous to proceed on during the night without a pilot who was intimately acquainted with the channel.

I was awakened during the night by a loud rushing sound, and on going on deck I found the captain and mate anxiously watching the cable.

"What is the matter?" I asked.

"Nothing as yet," was the reply; "but we shall be fortunate if our anchor holds, and we are saved from being carried down the stream. The river has risen considerably since we entered, and a strong current is coming down from the interior."

Happily our anchor did hold. The skipper and his mate kept watching it the whole night through, and had a second one ready to let go should the first yield; so I felt no inclination to turn in again, though I would not awake the rest of our party.

Next morning there was a strong breeze, and we were able to weigh anchor and run up against the current. When passing an island some way up, a couple of canoes came off with provisions to sell, when we readily became purchasers. Among other articles we bought a number of land-tortoises, which, when cooked, we found delicious. We had also a supply of very fine ripe plums, which grow wild in the forest on the banks of the stream. Altogether we fared sumptuously, and soon recovering our spirits, began to look more hopefully at the future. My father even talked of being able to return to Trinidad some day, should the Inquisi-

tion be got rid of. The people in the country generally detested it, and so especially did the new settlers, who had been accustomed to live in countries blessed with freer institutions.

For fully a week more we ran on, the wind favouring us—otherwise we should have made no progress. By the appearance of the banks we saw that the river had risen very considerably, and in many places the whole forest appeared to be growing out of the water, which extended amid the trees as far as the eye could reach. We had thus an advantage, as we could make a straight course and pass over sandbanks and shallows; whereas in the original state of the river we should have had to steer now on one side, now on the other, to avoid them.

The weather had hitherto been very fine; but at length one night, some hours after we had brought up, the wind began to increase, dark clouds gathered in the sky, the thunder roared, and vivid lightning darted through the air.

A cry arose, "The anchor has parted!" Sail was instantly made, and we drove before the blast. The broad river, hitherto so calm, was lashed into fierce waves, amid which the little sloop tumbled and tossed as if she was in mid-ocean. To anchor was impossible, and no harbour appeared on either side into which we could run for shelter. The trees bent beneath the fierce blast which swept over them. Our

only course was to keep on in the centre of the stream. Our brave skipper went to the helm, and did his best to keep up our spirits by assuring us that his sloop had weathered many a fiercer gale. The seas, however, continually broke aboard, and the straining mast and shrouds threatened every instant to yield to the fury of the tempest. If there was danger where we were, it was still greater near the submerged forest on either side; for the lofty trees, their roots loosened by the rushing water, were continually falling, and one of them coming down upon our vessel would quickly have crushed her, and sent her helplessly to the bottom.

Marian behaved like a true heroine, and terrific as was the scene, she endeavoured to keep up her own courage and that of all on board.

Hour after hour the little vessel struggled on amid the waves, till at length a blast more furious than any of its predecessors struck her, heeling her over, so that it appeared as if she would never rise again. Her sails were blown to ribbons, and the sea carried away her rudder. Now utterly helpless, she drove before the gale; which, shifting to the northward, blew directly across the stream, bearing us towards the submerged forest, where the waves as they rolled along dashed up amid the tall trees, sending the spray high over their branches.

On and on the vessel drove. A heavy sea rolling up filled our boat, towing astern, and, for our own safety,

we were compelled to cut her adrift. Before us arose out of the water a large tree with wide-spreading branches ; and in a few minutes the vessel drove violently against it. Her bowsprit was carried away, and a huge rent made in her bows, when she bounded off ; but it was only to drive helplessly further on. Every moment we expected to see the trees which were bending above our heads come down and crush us. Again the wind shifted, and we found ourselves drifting along by the edge of the forest. We endeavoured to get a rope round the trunk of one of the trees, but the effort was vain. Peter and another of the crew, in attempting to do so, were dragged overboard. We heard their cries, but we were unable to assist them, and they were quickly lost to sight in the darkness.

On and on we drove. The water was now rushing into the vessel, and every instant we expected that she would go down. All chance of saving her was abandoned ; and our only hope was that she might be driven against some tree, into the branches of which we might clamber for temporary safety. The roaring of the waves, the howling of the wind amid the branches, the dashing waters, and the crashing of the boughs torn off by the tempest, created a deafening uproar which almost drowned the sound of our voices. Uncle Paul, however, still tried to make himself heard. "Trust still in God. I will endeavour to save Marian," he said. "Be prepared, my friends, for whatever may

occur; don't lose your presence of mind." Scarcely had he spoken when the sloop was dashed with great violence against the trunk of an enormous tree, which, with several others forming a group, stood out from the forest. The water rushed rapidly into her, and we felt that she was sinking.

Uncle Paul, taking Marian in his arms, now sprang to the bows, followed by Arthur, who grasped my hand. "Come along, Guy; I must do my best to save you," he exclaimed, dragging me along. I did not at the moment see my father, who was in the after part of the vessel; but I knew that Tim would do his utmost to save him. Uncle Paul, in a manner a sailor alone could have accomplished, leaped on to a mass of hanging creepers which the sloop was at the moment touching; while Arthur and I found ourselves—I scarcely knew how we had got there—on another part of the vast trunk, when we instinctively began to climb up the tree. I saw that two other persons had reached the tree, when loud cries arose; and, to my dismay, as I looked down from the secure position I had gained, I could nowhere discover the vessel: she had disappeared. In vain I called to my father: no reply came. I now perceived the black man Sambo clinging to the upper part of a bough; and lower down, Kallolo the native holding on to a part above the water, out of which he had scrambled.

Just then the cry arose from amid the surging

water of "Help!—help! I shall be after being drowned entirely, if somebody doesn't pick me out of this!" I recognized Tim's voice; and Arthur and I were about to clamber down to help him, when Kallolo the native stretched out his hand, and catching Tim's as he floated by, dragged him out of the water. We went down to his assistance, and soon had him hauled up safe on the bough.

Tim had just expressed his gratitude to Kallolo, when he missed my father. "Ochone! what has become of the master?" he exclaimed. "Shure, he hasn't been drowned? Ochone!—ahone! what will become of us?" None of us could answer Tim's question. My father and the brave skipper had disappeared with the vessel, which, with too much reason, we feared had gone down. Tim only knew that he had found himself suddenly swept off the deck, and struggling in the water. Probably an overhanging bough, as the vessel swept by, had caught him. But, believing his master to be lost, he seemed scarcely to feel any satisfaction at having been saved himself.

With the fierce current rushing by the tree, and the heavy surges which dashed against it, we could not tell how long it might stand; indeed, every moment we expected to find it falling. Such must have been its fate, had not its roots been deeply planted in the ground.

We now turned our attention to Uncle Paul and

Marian, who stood in a sort of network but a few feet above the waves, which threatened to reach them. Our object was to get them at once into a more secure position.

Day was just breaking, the light revealing a wild and fearful scene. On one side the broad river, lashed into fierce waves, foamed and leaped frantically; while on the other was the forest region, the ground covered, as far as the eye could reach, with turbid waters, intermixed with fallen boughs and uprooted shrubs; while the trees sent down showers of leaves, fruit, and branches, rent off by the wind. But we had not much time to contemplate this scene. Arthur managed to reach a bough just above their heads, and then called to Uncle Paul, and begged him to climb up higher, so that he might get hold of Marian. It was no easy matter. But at last he succeeded; and with my help and her own exertions she was dragged up to the bough to which we clung. Uncle Paul soon followed; and we were now all able to rest and contemplate the future. Whether the waters would rise still higher, or how long they would cover the earth, we did not know. Of one thing we were certain, that they would not cover it altogether; but in other respects our position greatly resembled that of the inhabitants of the old world when the flood first began to rise, and they sought the hill-tops and the highest branches of the trees for safety. With

them the water continued to rise higher and higher, and they must have watched with horror and dismay their rapid progress. We knew, let the flood-gates of heaven be opened ever so wide, that the waters must ere long be stayed.

"Where is papa?—oh! what has become of him?" exclaimed Marian, looking round and not seeing our father among us.

"I trust that he is still on board the sloop," answered Uncle Paul, wishing not to alarm her. "Had she gone down, we should have seen her masts above the water. Probably, lightened of so many people, she floated on, and may be even now at no great distance. We must not despair; though our position, I own, is very critical."

"Shure, I think the master must have escaped," observed Tim. "He was at the other end of the vessel when the big bough knocked me overboard, and he and the skipper may even now be better off than we are; for if they get the craft in among the trees, they may stop without any trouble of anchoring; and they will have plenty of grub aboard, which is more than we are likely to find among these big trees, though we are much obliged to them for giving us shelter just now."

Poor Marian seemed somewhat comforted by these assurances, and asked no further questions, but sat on the bough on which we had placed her, gazing down

on the waters, which rolled in rapid eddies beneath us.

We were talking of what we should next try to do, when we heard a loud chattering above our heads; and looking up, we saw several monkeys, which had descended from the topmost boughs, gazing down on us,—some inspecting us with all the gravity of Turks, others swinging backwards and forwards on the pendent vines, as if they felt themselves at home, and were perfectly indifferent to our presence. While we remained quiet, they held their posts. One big fellow, especially, with a long tail and huge bushy whiskers, was unusually bold; and having crept along a bough, sat himself down not a dozen yards from the native Kallolo, of whom he appeared not to have the slightest dread. Kallolo began talking to him in his own language, and as soon as he ceased the monkey chattered a reply.

"He know me," said Kallolo. "We soon be great friends. Quacko!—Quacko! Dat your name, I know. Come here, good Quacko. Tell me where you been since you ran away from your old master," he continued.

"Quacko!—Quacko!" answered the monkey, imitating the Indian's tone of voice.

Kallolo then began to work his way along the bough. The monkey, instead of retreating, came nearer and nearer; when Kallolo stopped, still speaking

in the same soothing tone. Once more he moved on. It seemed as if the monkey were fascinated; for I could not suppose that the creature really understood the native, or that the native understood the meaning of the monkey's chattering. At length Kallolo got within reach of Quacko, when, gently stretching out his hand, he began to tickle the monkey's nose. Then he got a little nearer, till he could scratch its head and back. All this time the monkey sat perfectly still, although its companions were climbing here and there, some swinging backwards and forwards on the vines, others making all sorts of grimaces at us. At length, to our surprise, we saw Kallolo take Quacko in his arms, and quickly return with him into our midst. Quacko looked a little alarmed at us, but was speedily soothed, and in a few minutes he appeared quite at home.

"He has been among white men before this," observed Kallolo, showing the monkey's ears, which had small gold ear-rings in them. "I thought so when him first come to look at us. He and I great friends before long."

Thus was the extraordinary way in which Kallolo had apparently fascinated the monkey accounted for. As the native had predicted, the creature was soon as much at home with us as if we had been friends all our lives. Strange as it may seem, under the perilous circumstances in which we were placed this incident

afforded us much amusement and considerable relief. Our thoughts, however, were soon turned to a more important subject,—the means of finding support. We agreed that the monkeys could not live in the trees without food; and what assisted to sustain them would help to keep us alive, though too probably we should soon produce a scarcity.

Kallolo overheard us speaking on the subject. "We have plenty to eat, never fear," he observed.

"I wish you could show us that same," said Tim.

"Why, we catch the other monkeys, and eat them," said Kallolo. "You take care of Quacko, while I go and look for food."

As Kallolo spoke, he began to ascend the tree, and was soon lost to sight amid the dense foliage. As we looked up we could not see anywhere near the summits of the trees. We might, as far as we could judge, be at the foot of "Jack's beanstalk." Taking Kallolo's hint, Tim tried to catch one of the other monkeys; but though Quacko remained quietly with us, they were far too cautious and nimble to allow him to get up with them, and I feared that in his eagerness he would tumble off into the foaming waters and be swept away. Uncle Paul at last called to him, and told him to give up the chase as utterly hopeless. Uncle Paul, however, advised us to search more carefully, in the hope that we might find either nuts or fruit of some sort or other, or bird's eggs, or

young birds, which might serve us as food, while he remained to take care of Marian.

I had not gone far when I heard a sound, coming from no great distance, of "Wow! wow! wow!" and looking along the bough, I caught sight of a bird rather smaller than the common pigeon, but of beautiful plumage. Its head and breast were blue, the neck and belly of a bright yellow; and, from the shortness of its legs, it appeared as if sitting, like a hen on her nest. It saw me, but made no attempt to move. I had little hope, however, of catching it with my hands, and suspected that it would fly away should I attempt to approach it nearer. I therefore retreated, and considered what was best to be done. Then, I bethought me that by cutting a long stiff sepo to serve as a wand, I might form a noose at the end of it, and thus catch not only the bird before me, but any others which might be in the trees. I immediately put my plan into execution; and a sepo suitable for the purpose being within my reach, I cut it. Fortunately I had a piece of string in my pocket, with which I manufactured a noose; and returning along the branch, I held my wand at an angle above me, so as to let the end drop down on the bird. I was more successful than I expected. Not till it actually felt the noose round its neck, did it attempt to fly; but it was then too late. As I jerked it towards me, a quantity of feathers fell from it. I got it speedily

in my hands, and, influenced by feeling how acceptable it would be, immediately wrung its neck, and brought it down in triumph. Looking round, I saw several other birds of the same species, and was successful in catching three more; for they made not the slightest attempt to fly away till I was close upon them.

I at length returned with my game to the large branch where I had left Uncle Paul and Marian. Arthur and Tim came back about the same time; the one with some eggs, and the latter with a couple of tree-frogs of huge size.

"Faith, when a man's hungry he mustn't be particular," observed Tim; "and it seemed to me that though these beasts are not over pretty to look at, they might serve to keep body and soul together till better times come round."

"Very right," said Uncle Paul. "I trust that these few trees will supply us with sufficient food if we search for it, and I am not very squeamish as to its character."

Sambo brought in a very ugly-looking lizard; but he declared that it would prove as good to eat as anything else. We now somewhat anxiously awaited the return of Kallolo.

The only articles which could be eaten with satisfaction, unless cooked, were the eggs which Arthur had brought, and these he and Uncle Paul insisted should be given to Marian. It required some per-

suasion to induce her to take them, as she was unwilling to deprive us of them ; and it was only by assuring her that when our appetites were a little sharper we should eat the frogs and lizards with satisfaction, that we could induce her to consume the eggs.

We now discussed the possibility of making a fire to cook our provisions. There was room enough in the fork of a large branch ; but the danger was that we might set the whole tree alight, and burn it and ourselves. Still, we did not as yet feel inclined to eat the frogs and lizards, or even the birds, raw, though we knew that we might in the end be compelled to do so.

At length we heard Kallolo's voice above us ; and looking up, we saw him descending the tree. " Here, friends. See ! " he exclaimed, " I have not made my trip up to the sky for nothing ; " and he produced from a grass-formed pocket, which he always carried by his side, a supply of ripe figs. He parted them among us, offering Marian the largest share.

How delicious those figs tasted ! They were both meat and drink to us ; and we felt that while a bountiful Providence supplied us with such food, we need have no fear of starving.

I showed Kallolo the birds which I had caught. He called them bocloras, and observed that they were pretty good food, and he hoped that we might catch some others which would come to feed on the ripe figs.

CHAPTER VI.

WE LIGHT A FIRE—A MORNING SCENE—DESCRIPTION OF "GROVE ISLAND"—
ATTACKED BY MACAWS—THE SLOTH—KALLOLO TAMES A PARROT.



WE had no fear of starving, even though we might not be able to quit our present abode for many days to come, but we were surrounded by dangers to which we could not shut our eyes. The trees, vast as they were, might be uprooted and hurled prostrate into the flood, should another storm come on ; or the lightning might strike them, and every one of us be destroyed. Besides, many weeks might pass before we could descend and travel over the dry ground ; and even then, in what direction should we go ? Very probably we should fall into the hands of savages, who would keep us in slavery ; at all events, we should have to encounter several wild beasts and venomous serpents,—the mighty boa, or anaconda, or the still more terrible bush-master, or labarri, so dreaded in this region.

What had become of our father and the brave skipper, Jan van Dunk, we could not tell. Uncle

Paul did his utmost to keep up our spirits, setting us the example by his cheerfulness, and by showing his perfect confidence in Providence.

We had, as I have said, a supply of food ; but how to cook it ? was the question. Kallolo declared there would be no danger in lighting a fire in the fork of the tree, provided we did not allow it to burn longer than was necessary, and kept a watch to prevent its extending up the bark on either side. Uncle Paul always carried a small tinder-box and matches, so that we could at once obtain a light. We accordingly collected a supply of dry branches, of which there was an abundance attached to the various parts of the trees. Kallolo again set off, taking my wand and noose ; and by the time the fire had been lighted and had burned up sufficiently, he returned with several birds, adding considerably to our stock of provisions. They were all quickly plucked and spitted, and we were soon busily engaged in cooking them. Tim insisted on dressing his frogs, and Sambo the lizard he had caught, both declaring that they would prove more tender than the birds. How they might have appeared had they been put into a pot and boiled, I cannot say ; as it was, they certainly presented an unattractive appearance. Some large leaves served us as plates, and we had to use our fingers instead of knives and forks ; but notwithstanding, we made a very hearty meal. I tasted part of the hind leg of one of

the frogs, and I certainly should not have known it from a tender young chicken cooked in the same way. Kallolo in his last trip had brought down a few more figs, one of which he presented to each of us as a dessert. Tim declared that the banquet would have been perfect if we could have had a little of the "cra-tur," or, in the absence of it, a cup of hot coffee. We had to quench our thirst with some of the very turbid water surrounding us, which we brought up in our hats.

The day passed far more rapidly than I could have supposed possible. The storm had completely subsided, but the waters in no way lessened; indeed, they were slightly higher than on the previous night. Uncle Paul advised that we should all look out for sleeping-places, where we might rest without the danger of tumbling off. Our first care was to find one for Marian. A mass of sepos hung down and formed a regular hammock close under a bough, and by carefully arranging a few more sepos, Uncle Paul and Arthur made it so secure that it was impossible for her to fall out. They told me to take a berth of a similar character close to her, while Uncle Paul formed one for himself on a bough, a little on one side. The rest of the party arranged themselves as they thought fit; Kallolo, with his new friend, climbing up to one of the higher boughs, on which he stretched himself, with the monkey crouching down close to him. The

way in which he kept close to the native showed that he had long been accustomed to human society, and was delighted to find himself in it again.

Our first night in our tree-home was passed in perfect tranquillity. Scarcely a breath of air moved the leaves. The sky was clear, and the crescent moon overhead afforded just sufficient light to enable us to get into our respective berths. We were all weary with the exertions and anxiety we had gone through, and the want of sleep during the previous night, and scarcely had we got into our nests when the eyes of most of us, I suspect, were closed. I just kept awake long enough to see that Marian had gone off into a quiet slumber, and then quickly dropped into the land of dreams ; and I don't think I ever slept more soundly than I did in my strange resting-place.

I might possibly have slumbered on till the sun was high in the sky, but I was awakened, ere the light of early dawn had penetrated amid the thick foliage which surrounded us, by a strange concert of sounds. Monkeys were jabbering overhead ; tree-frogs were quacking ; parrots were chattering and macaws were screeching more loudly than all, as they flew over the topmost boughs. For some time I was too much confused to remember where I was, or what was producing the strange din in my ears. In vain I tried to go to sleep again, and at length I was completely aroused. My first impulse was to look out for

Marian. She was still sleeping calmly, while the rest of the party, as far as I could discern by the uncertain light, were resting in the positions in which I had seen them at night. Gradually the dawn drew on, and on sitting up I caught sight of half a dozen ugly-looking faces peering down on us. I knew that they were those of monkeys which had descended from the topmost boughs, whither they had retreated when we took possession of their abode. Two or three of them then approached Quacko, and tried to induce him to rejoin them. He answered their invitations by indignant gestures, which seemed to say that he had no intention, after finding himself again in civilized society, of returning to savage life. The noise he made awoke his new friend Kallolo, however, who began to talk to him in the language which he seemed to understand, and presently the monkey came down from his perch and nestled in his arms.

The rays of the rising sun streaming amid the boughs awoke the rest of the party, who, getting out of their respective nests, scrambled on to the main bough. Uncle Paul suggested that we should set to work immediately to procure food for breakfast. My plan for noosing birds being generally adopted, Arthur as well as Kallolo and Sambo, at once cut some wands and fitted them in a manner similar to mine.

We agreed to let Marian sleep on till breakfast was ready. Before the food could be eaten, however, it

had to be hunted for and cooked, and as we were all hungry, we set off among the branches in search of whatever we could find. I climbed higher than I had before done, and reached a small fig-tree growing in the fork of a large branch. A number of birds were perched on it, some with black and red plumage, others with heads and necks of a bright red, while the wings and tails were of a dark green and black. They were employed in eating the ripe fruit. I determined to catch as many as I could before securing some of the latter. Carefully climbing on, I set to work, and succeeded in noosing four of each species. Having filled my pockets and cap with as many of the ripe figs as I could carry, after I had driven the birds away with loud shouts, hoping they would not return till I had made a second visit to the fig-tree, I began to descend, though not without difficulty; for, as every one knows, it is easier to climb up than to get down a tree, and a fall from a branch would have been a serious matter.

I reached our resting-place in safety, and found Marian seated by the side of Uncle Paul. The rest of the party came in soon after, all having had some success. Tim, however, had got only one bird, but he boasted of having collected half a dozen frogs; while Sambo had caught the same number of lizards. Arthur had secured a couple of good-sized parrots; and Kallolo had discovered a macaw's nest, the young

of which he had taken, with a good supply of figs. Altogether, we had reason to be satisfied with our morning's hunt, as we had food enough to last us for the day. The birds I had caught were found to be manakins and tiger-birds. The latter were small, and though their bodies were ill-shaped, their flesh was tender and well-tasted.

Though our position was full of anxiety, we should not have been unhappy could we have known that our father had escaped. Uncle Paul told us that he had been to the end of a bough from which he could obtain a view both up and down the stream, but that he had failed to get a sight of the sloop; neither could he see anything of the mate and the Indian, who had been carried overboard when attempting to secure the vessel to the trunk of a tree.

We collected some more dried branches and withered leaves, sufficient to make a fire for cooking our provisions.

"I wish we had a pot for boiling water," I remarked.

"It would be a mighty good thing, Mr. Guy, if we had any tay to make in it, and some sugar to sweeten it," observed Tim.

"In the meantime, we should be thankful that we have got so much wholesome food, and cold water to quench our thirst; though, for Marian's sake, I should be glad to have had some tea," said Uncle Paul.

"Oh, don't think about me," exclaimed Marian. "I am perfectly content to drink cold water, and do not wish for anything which it is impossible to obtain."

"You are a sensible girl," said Uncle Paul, patting her cheek. "The uncomplaining spirit you possess will greatly aid you in going through the dangers and hardships we may have to encounter."

I must confess that we made a very hearty meal, though it would have been more palatable had we possessed some salt. That I knew, however, it would be impossible to obtain, situated where we were. Having partly roasted the remainder of the birds, as well as the frogs and lizards, to assist in preserving them we hung them up in a shady place which we called our larder, under a thick branch, where we hoped they would keep sweet till they were required for food.

Marian felt her position more irksome than did any one else, as she was unable to climb about, though Arthur and I helped her to walk up and down the thick bough; but it was very much like a fisherman's walk, —three steps and overboard. However, it was preferable to sitting still, and prevented her limbs from becoming cramped. She then went and sat down again, when Uncle Paul, Arthur, and I started off on an exploring expedition through our grove. There were not, altogether, more than seven main trunks; but numberless sepos interlaced the boughs, and striking downwards, where they had apparently taken root,

had again sprung upwards, forming spiral stems, some considerably thicker than a man's body, others as thin as the smallest ropes of a ship's rigging. We had no great difficulty in making our way, but caution was necessary to save ourselves from tumbling down into the water. Among the trees was a beautiful cedar, three palm-trees of different species, and a cotton-tree of prodigious height, with wide-spreading top. Another was called the mulatto-tree; which had a tall, slim trunk, and leaves of a dark green, with branches spreading amid those of its neighbours, and covered with clusters of small white flowers. But I cannot attempt to describe either the trees or the numerous parasitic plants, some worthy to be called trees from their size, which formed this curious grove. Several besides the fig-trees bore fruit and nuts, affording food to monkeys and other animals, and to various species of birds.

One end of the grove was less closely united than the main portion, but still two projecting boughs interlaced, and were joined likewise by chains of sepos, forming an easy communication between the two parts. Arthur and I, wishing to explore the whole of this somewhat confined region of which we were for a time the inhabitants, made our way across this natural bridge I have described. When we got to the further end we heard a concert of gentle "caws," far less sonorous than those made by the parrots we had seen

passing near the grove on the previous day, the sounds now rising, now falling. Stopping to ascertain from what direction in the grove the noises proceeded, we soon discovered that they came from a tree which shot out several branches about a dozen or twenty feet from the surface of the water.

“Those noises must come from parrots, I am sure,” said Arthur, after we had listened a little time. “We shall be able to get a fine collection of young birds, which will be far more tender than the old ones. We will just take a few for supper to-night, and we can return when we want more.”

Accordingly, we climbed along among the branches.

“I see some old birds there too,” observed Arthur. “If they are parrots, they are very large ones. I suspect that they are macaws. We shall soon find out, however.”

We had stopped to rest, for that sort of climbing was somewhat fatiguing work ; but again we went on, Arthur leading the way. He had a large sheath-knife, which Sambo the black had lent him, secured to his waist. The tree we had reached was of great age, and was full of holes and numerous hollow stumps of boughs broken off by tempests or lightning. In each of these hollows was a large nest with a couple of fledgelings ; but no sooner did Arthur and I stretch out our hands to seize some of the young birds, intending to transfer them to the bags which we carried at our backs, than

the old birds sitting on the branches above us set up a deafening screaming and screeching, while others appeared from all quarters. Some flew across, as it seemed, from the opposite forest; others came forth from various parts of the surrounding foliage, by which they had been concealed, with the evident intention of doing battle for their young. Down they flew, screaming loudly, with open beaks and fierce eyes, and surrounded us on all sides; some assailing our heads, and some our bare legs and feet, while others got hold of our shirts and pulled lustily at them. It was only with the greatest difficulty that we could defend our eyes, which they seemed resolved to tear out.

“Leap, Guy—leap into the water; that is the only chance we have of saving ourselves!” exclaimed Arthur, drawing his knife and attempting to keep the savage birds at bay. I had no weapon to defend myself with, so, following his advice, I leaped down to a part of the tree whence I could spring into the water, and putting my hands above my head, plunged into the turbid flood, diving down some feet, regardless of the risk I ran of striking any concealed boughs beneath the surface. Escaping injury, I quickly rose again, in time to hear Arthur’s plunge as he followed me. The macaws darted down upon us; but as we again dived, they flew up—to ascertain, we supposed, whether we had plundered their nests. Happily, the current not being very strong, we were able to stem it, and make good

way, till we reached the main part of the grove, where, getting hold of some sepos which hung down into the water, we clambered up again to a branch, on which we were glad to rest after our exertions, having escaped a danger which might have been of a very serious nature. We agreed, however, that should we be pressed for food, we would, notwithstanding, make another attack on the "macawery," to coin a word, and carry off some of the young birds. We found that we had not escaped altogether free. I had received two or three ugly pecks from the birds' beaks, which had torn my flesh, the wounds now smarting considerably; while Arthur had fared even worse, two of them having made rents in his shirt, and pecked out three or four pieces of his flesh.

Having rested, we now began to make our way back to our friends; but I had not gone far when I caught sight of a large hairy creature hanging on to a bough at no great distance, apparently watching us as we made our way amid the branches.

"O Arthur!" I exclaimed, "there's a bear. He will be down upon us, and treat us much worse than the macaws have done."

Arthur looked in the direction I pointed. "Don't be afraid," he answered. "It will not attack us. The animal is a sloth, as harmless as any living creature. We may consider him among the other beasts in our domain destined if necessary for our use. He cannot

get away, so we will not attempt to interfere with him at present. He will not venture into the water; and even had we ground below us, he would not descend, as he would be sure to be caught if he did. We will climb nearer, so as to get a better view of him, for he seems to have no dread of us, and will not try to escape."

We did as Arthur proposed, and found the creature had a short head, with a small round face, and was covered with coarse, shaggy hair, looking very much like withered grass. It had powerful claws and long arms, with which it clung to the branch; while its hinder legs, which were half the length of the others, had feet of peculiar formation, which enabled it to hold on to the bough. In truth, we discerned what we had before heard, that the sloth is especially formed to live in trees—though not on the branches, like the squirrel, but under them; indeed, it generally moves suspended from the branch, and at night, when sleeping, rests in the same attitude, under the branch, hanging on by its powerful arms and legs. Its arms being very long and powerful, with strong claws instead of fingers, it is enabled to defend itself against the large snakes which frequently attack it. We could only hope that it was not alone, and that should we require sloth-steaks we might be able to have an ample supply. We had no fears, indeed, about obtaining as much animal food as we might require, though it was possible that we might,

before we could escape, eat up all the food to be found in our domain.

At length we got back to where we had left Uncle Paul and Marian. We recounted our adventures to them, when Marian was not a little agitated at hearing of our encounter with the macaws, and at our having been compelled to leap into the river.

"Oh, how dreadful it would have been had you been drowned," she exclaimed; "or had a shark or alligator, or an anaconda, snapped you up!"

"There was very little danger of that," answered Arthur. "We had not very far to swim before we got hold of a branch and drew ourselves out of the water."

"I am not quite so certain about that as you are, Arthur," observed Uncle Paul. "We all have reason to be thankful that you escaped the danger in which you were placed."

When Kallolo returned, after another exploring expedition, and heard of our adventures, he said that he would go at night and capture the young macaws, when the parents would not attempt to defend them; and that he should probably, at the same time, be able to catch some of the older birds. He had brought with him an ara parrot, as he called it, which, young as it was, had already grown to a considerable size. Though it had not yet obtained its full plumage, its colours were very beautiful. Its body was of a flaming

scarlet, while the wings were red, yellow, blue, and green; its tail, which was of great length, being scarlet and blue. He had caught the bird with a noose, just as it was about to leave the nest, and he said that he had hopes of being able to tame it. The creature seemed but little disconcerted, and finding that it was treated kindly, at once fed willingly out of his hand. He secured it by a piece of string to a small branch near us, where it could perch at its ease. Quacko the monkey looked at it with a somewhat jealous eye, but Kallolo made him understand that he must not interfere with the new favourite, and Ara and Quacko soon became friends.

The day passed away in our truly sylvan abode much faster than I could have expected; and could we but have been assured that my father was safe, we should, considering the circumstances, have been tolerably happy and contented. At night we all went to sleep in the positions we had before occupied.

CHAPTER VII.

WE MAKE A PLATFORM—A SAIL!—THE MISSING ONES ARRIVE—MY FATHER DESCRIBES THEIR ADVENTURES—DUTCH DETERMINATION—VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY—A CALM—I CATCH A LARGE FISH—THE RAFT ON FIRE—ABOUT SHIP.



TWO days passed by, spent much as those I have before described. The calm continued ; not a breath of air stirred the mud-tinted expanse of water stretching out to the northward. Up to this time the flood had not in the slightest degree decreased ; indeed, the mark Uncle Paul had made on the first day showed that it had rather increased an inch or two. At all events, there was no present prospect, as far as we could see, of our getting away from our present abode. Arthur proposed that we should form a raft. This would not have been difficult, as we had several large knives among us, and with some labour we might have cut off branches from the trees and bound them together with sepos. But then the question arose, In what direction should we go, even supposing that we could form a raft to hold the whole party ? We might have to paddle, for aught we knew to the contrary, for days and days together before we

could reach dry land; and when there, were we likely to be better off than where we were at present? Taking all things into consideration, Uncle Paul decided, when his advice was asked, that it would be better to let well alone, and to remain in the grove. Vessels went occasionally up and down the river, and when the water subsided we might be seen by one of them, and be taken off. We should thus, however, run the risk of again falling into the hands of the Spaniards, and Uncle Paul especially was very unwilling to trust to their tender mercies.

“My opinion is that we should remain here till we are compelled to move, and then make our way up one of the many streams to the south, which rise in the Dutch territories, where we are sure to meet with a friendly reception,” he observed. Arthur agreed with him, and the rest of the party were willing to be guided by their decision.

It was proposed, as there was a probability of our spending some weeks in our present abode, that we should endeavour to render it more habitable than at present. Kallolo described to us how a tribe of natives in the neighbourhood make platforms, resting on the trunks of the palm-trees, where they and their families live in comparative comfort during the whole period of the inundation. The idea, being started, was highly approved of, and we all immediately set to work to get long poles for the purpose. A spot was selected,

higher up the tree, where a number of branches ran out horizontally, almost level with each other. As soon as a pole was cut it was secured with sepos, Uncle Paul and Sambo exercising their nautical knowledge for the purpose. It required no small number of poles, but the little forest afforded an abundant supply. Before the end of the day the platform was completed. We then built a hut on it, devoted to Marian's use. The only thing wanting was a quantity of clay to form a hearth; but clay, while the waters covered the earth, it was impossible to obtain. We had therefore to light our fire, as before, on the thick branch, on which it had as yet made no impression, beyond burning off the bark and blackening it. As soon as our platform was finished we moved on to it, though Kallolo and Sambo preferred sleeping among the boughs. I was very glad to get so comparatively comfortable a place for poor Marian; whose health, however, notwithstanding the hardships she had endured, remained unimpaired.

Our first work being finished, we erected a look-out place at the end of a long bough, clearing away the branches which intercepted our view up and down the stream. Here one of us took post during daylight, that we might watch for any craft navigating the river. Should a Spanish vessel appear, we agreed that we would let her pass without making a signal; but should a Dutch or English one come in sight, though it was not likely that any of our own

countrymen would visit the river, we determined to do our best to attract the attention of those on board.

All this time there had been scarcely a breath of wind, and though our look-out place had been occupied, we knew that no vessel could pass up, and it was very unlikely that any would venture down the stream at the mercy of the current. Two days after the look-out post had been established, as I took my watch at daybreak, the bright sun rising above the distant horizon, I felt the breeze fan my cheeks. Every instant it increased, rippling the hitherto calm surface of the broad river into mimic waves. As I watched, now turning my eyes up, now down the stream, I saw, emerging from behind a projecting point of the forest, a white sail. From the progress it made towards me, it appeared to be that of a large boat, and was certainly not such as was likely to be used by Indians. At first I had hoped that it might be the sloop; but I soon saw, from the cut of the sail, and its size, that it was not such as she would carry. If the people on board were Spaniards, I was not to make a signal to them. How tantalizing it would be to see her pass by; and yet I had no doubt that Uncle Paul was right in not wishing again to fall into their hands. I would not call to my friends till I had some more certain information to communicate, so I sat eagerly watching the sail. At length I saw that it was positively coming nearer. From its height out of the

water, I again began to hope that it might after all be that of the sloop, which might have rigged a jury-mast. Nearer and nearer it came, and at length I saw that it was certainly not the sloop, but the oddest build of vessel I had ever set eyes on. As I gazed, I at last discovered that it was not a vessel at all, but part of the trunk of a huge tree, with a mast, to which a sail was spread, stepped on it. No wonder that it approached slowly !

I now began to hope that my father and the skipper had escaped, and that it might be bringing them to us ; so I could no longer resist shouting out to Uncle Paul, who quickly joined me. After examining it narrowly, he exclaimed : “ I have no doubt about it ; I am nearly certain that I can make out your father and Captain van Dunk, as well as the mate and the native. Most thankful am I that they have all been preserved, for I confess I did not expect to see them again.”

The breeze increasing, the log approached somewhat faster than at first, and all our doubts were soon set at rest. Uncle Paul and I, standing up, waved our handkerchiefs and shouted, to draw their attention. We were at length seen, and the course of the log, which was impelled by paddles as well as a sail, was directed towards us. Having communicated the joyful intelligence to the rest of the party, we all descended to the lowest branch, the only accessible part of the tree from the water. I need scarcely picture our delight when at

length the log glided up, and we were able to welcome my poor father. He looked thin and careworn, as if he had gone through great hardships ; and even the honest skipper was considerably pulled down. Having secured the log, which was of a peculiarly light and buoyant character, we invited my father and his companions up to our platform, where breakfast had just been prepared. They were greatly surprised to find that we had cooked food ; and they were ready to do ample justice to it, as they had been living all the time on raw provisions. As soon as my father and the rest of us had satisfied our hunger, he described what had occurred to them.

After we had escaped from the sloop, she had been driven down the stream for some miles along the forest ; but at length, striking against a projecting point of a log, she had gone down in shallow water, my father and the skipper being providentially able to make their way to a large tree, a branch of which projected from the stem only a few feet above the surface. Here they rested till daylight. The skipper then managed to reach the vessel, which had sunk close below them, and got hold of some spars and one of the sails ; which they hoisted up to their resting-place. The second trip he made he managed to get hold of a small cask of biscuits and a bottle of schiedam. This nourishment greatly revived them, and they began to consider how they could come to our assistance ; for

of course, not being aware that we should be able to obtain an abundant supply of provisions, they feared that we should perish from hunger. In vain, however, the skipper endeavoured to recover a sufficient number of spars to form a raft. On the third trip he made to the vessel he was nearly washed away, so my father entreated him not again to venture. He did so, however, and getting hold of a coil of rope, fastened one end of it to the branch and the other round his waist. He made several more trips, and recovered a cask of herrings, another of biscuits, and three more bottles of schiedam. The current, however, driving against the vessel, already fearfully damaged by the blows she had received, began to break her up; and although the brave skipper made several attempts to recover more articles, they were mostly unsuccessful. He had, however, got hold of Marian's small box of clothing, which had been saved when so many things were washed out of the boat. He had also saved a saucepan, some hooks and lines, an axe, a saw, a small auger, a few nails, and some other articles, which had been thrown into an empty cask. They had now no longer any dread of immediate starvation for themselves, but their anxiety about us was by no means lessened; and having sufficient provisions to last them for several days, they felt more eager than ever to reach us.

They had seen several logs floating down the stream at a distance. At length it struck them that if they

could obtain one of these, they might, with the aid of the sail and the spars they had saved, accomplish their object. It would have been madness to get upon one of them unless they could manage to secure it to their branch. At length an enormous log came floating by, evidently of very light wood, as it rose high out of the water, with a branch projecting from one end. Their anxiety was intense lest an eddy might turn it off and drift it from them. The gallant skipper stood, rope in hand, anxiously watching it. At length it came directly under them; so he leapt upon it, and with a sailor's dexterity immediately fastened the end of the rope round the branch. It was brought up, and they thus obtained what they so much desired.

The wind, however, was contrary, and still blowing so strong that it might have been dangerous even had it been favourable for them to commence their voyage. The time, however, was spent by the skipper, aided by my father, in cutting a step in the log for the mast, which was at length fixed securely with wedges driven down on either side, and stayed up with a portion of the rope which could be spared. They had now a vessel of sufficient size not only to carry them, but to convey the whole of the party, should they find us. Still they had several days to wait before they could commence their voyage. They also formed a rudder with one of the spars; and out of a piece of plank which had been

secured, along with two other spars, they constructed two oars to assist in impelling their unwieldy craft. At last a light breeze sprang up. There was no little difficulty in getting clear of the branch ; but after all their stores had been placed on it, the skipper, by his good management, at last succeeded. The sail was hoisted, and to their great satisfaction the log went ahead. They had, of course, to keep close in by the forest, to avoid the strength of the current ; but although a back eddy helped them now and then, their progress was very slow. Still they did go ahead. They had almost abandoned all hopes of finding the mate and the Indian, as the skipper fancied they had both been drowned.

They had been coasting along for some hours, sometimes scarcely going ahead, at others not making more than half a knot or so an hour, when a voice, which seemed to come out of the forest, reached them ; and, looking in the direction from which the sound came, they saw two men sitting on a projecting branch of a high tree, whom the skipper recognized as his mate Peter, and Maco the Indian. They being alive proved that they must have obtained food, and this raised their hopes that we also had not died of starvation. How the two men could get down and reach the log was now the question. Captain van Dunk and my father stood in as close as they could venture. Their fear was that the mast might be caught by some of the

overhanging branches, or that some submerged bough might strike the log and upset it. Both dangers had to be guarded against. The log was moving very slowly. The skipper therefore hailed the men, telling them to come down and that he would pick them up. The Indian, Maco, was the first to follow his advice. Descending to the lowest branch, which was nearly thirty feet above the surface, he plunged headlong in ; and though he disappeared for nearly a minute, he rose again, and soon reached the log. The skipper then told him to take the remaining piece of the rope, and, if possible, carry it up to the branch, so that Peter might have the means of descending. He willingly undertook the task, but expressed his fear that he would not succeed. Suddenly his eye fell on the axe.

"I will do it now," he said, "without fear." Taking the implement in his hand, and the rope, which he fastened round his waist, he swam back to the tree. He was soon seen cutting notches in the trunk, one above the other, and clinging to them with his toes and one hand. He quickly ascended, dragging the rope up with him. Peter had, meantime, descended to the lowest branch, and by stooping down helped him up the last few feet. The rope was secured ; then the Indian, giving the axe to Peter, told him to swim off with it to the log. Peter quickly descended, having only a few feet to drop into the water ; and as he was a fair swimmer, though not a diver, he soon reached

the log, and my father and the skipper hauled him up. The gallant Indian then casting off the rope plunged with it into the stream, towing it off to the log. He was not a minute behind Peter, and was hauled up somewhat exhausted by his exertions.

The two men told my father and the skipper that, on being left behind, they had swum to a branch at some distance from where they had been left, and having climbed the tree to which it belonged, had wandered, by means of the sepos interlacing the boughs, some way through the forest, till they reached the tree on which my father and the skipper saw them. They had obtained an abundance of food; but having no means of lighting a fire, they had been compelled to eat it raw. Their animal food consisted chiefly of young birds, lizards, tree-frogs, and grubs; and their vegetable food, of some plums and other fruits, and the inside leaves of the assai palm, and various nuts.

The sail, which had been lowered, was again hoisted, and the voyage was continued. Darkness came on, but the crew of the log was now sufficiently strong to be divided into two watches, and the skipper and my father were able to lie down and rest, while Peter took the helm, and Maco, the Indian, kept a look out ahead, and stood ready to lower the sail if necessary. Thus all night long they continued gliding on, but very slowly. This, however, enabled them to keep a bright look-out in the forest. Great was their satisfaction



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Maco leaped after us.

when, the next morning, they caught sight of me,—their anxiety about us was relieved.

So great was our joy on finding our poor father, that all the dangers in prospect were overlooked; and had we not still been mourning the loss of our dear mother, we should have been, I believe, perfectly happy.

Our father was astonished at the comfortable abode we had erected, and at the ample supply of provisions we had obtained. The skipper and Peter were, however, anxious to continue the voyage; and Uncle Paul also wished to go with them, in the hope that the mouth of some stream might be found near at hand, up which they might proceed till they could get on dry land. The grand idea of the skipper was to reach firm ground, and then to build a vessel in which to return to Guiana. He felt confident that it could be accomplished.

“Where there is a will there is a way. It can be done, and it shall be done, if health and strength be allowed us!” he exclaimed, with Dutch determination, which an enemy would have called obstinacy. My father, however, was unwilling to allow Marian to undertake the fatigue to which she would have been subjected. It was necessary, therefore, even though the log could have carried us all, that some should remain with her. He naturally resolved to do so. Tim, having found his master, was not willing to leave him; and Arthur decided also to stop and help

my father in taking care of Marian. The skipper consented to leave Sambo to assist in hunting for food. I was eager for the adventure, and my father, after some little hesitation, allowed me to go.

Kallolo had consented to leave the monkey for the amusement of Marian; but no sooner did Quacko see his master on the log, than he sprang off and took up his post on the further end, showing very clearly that he had no intention of being left behind. "Pray let him go," said Marian. "I would on no account detain him, for he probably would be very unhappy if separated from Kallolo." Quacko, therefore, became one of our crew, or rather a passenger, for it was not to be expected that he would do much towards the navigation of the log.

The day was spent in making some preparations for the voyage and in exchanging provisions, the skipper generously offering to leave the cask of biscuits, some herrings, and a couple of bottles of his beloved schiedam with my father. "If we find the mouth of a river, and believe that we can easily sail up it, we will return for you, as it might take us some weeks to complete our craft, and you would not wish to live up the tree all that time," he said.

At daybreak the next morning we commenced our voyage. A strong breeze filled our sail, and we glided on with greater speed than the log had before moved through the water. Among other articles which had

been put on board were a number of large nuts from the cuja-tree, with which Uncle Paul proposed forming floats or life-buoys for each of the party. "We might," he observed, "have to swim on shore, or they might help on some other occasion to save our lives." Kallolo had manufactured a quantity of line from the fibres of a tree of the palm species in our grove, so that we had an abundance of cordage. After we were afloat and on our voyage, I could not help thinking that we might have built a canoe, which would certainly have been more manageable than the unwieldy log; but Mynheer van Dunk preferred the more stable conveyance.

As the wind continued fresh and favourable, we made pretty fair way, and were in good spirits. As we went along we kept a watchful eye for any indications of an opening on our larboard side; but mile after mile was accomplished, and only a long line of forest met our sight. We sailed on by night as well as by day, to take advantage of the favourable breeze; and by keeping close in, sometimes even between islands of trees, if I may so describe them, we escaped the strength of the current.

The natives, I should have said, had brought a number of thin straight branches, with which to manufacture bows, and arrows, and lances, that we might have the means of killing game when our provisions should be expended. Kallolo, indeed, understood how to make the celebrated *zabatana*, or blow-pipe, though

he had not been able to obtain the wood he required. How could he, indeed, he observed, find the materials for concocting the woorali poison into which to dip the point of his darts? He hoped, however, when we reached the shore, to obtain the necessary ingredients, and to form a blow-pipe, with which he promised to kill as much game as we should require.

We had sailed on four days, when we reached a point, on rounding which we saw a wide expanse of water before us, with another point in the far distance. We knew therefore that we were at the mouth of a considerable river. It was what we were looking for, and the wind, which had changed to the northward, would enable us to sail up it. The current, however, was setting down the river, and just as we had eased off the sheet, intending to run up it, the wind failed, and we were speedily drifted out again. We could not reach a tree to which to make fast, and there we lay, floating helplessly on the calm surface. After drifting for half a mile along the edge of the forest, we found ourselves in slack water, in which we lay, neither advancing nor receding. Our food was running somewhat short, but, fortunately, we had our hooks and lines, and taking some dried herrings as bait, we set to work to fish. We had not long to wait before we caught several somewhat curiously shaped creatures, which we should from their appearance have hesitated to eat, had not Kallolo, who knew

most of them, told us which were wholesome and which poisonous. Some he immediately knocked on the head and threw overboard. As we were unwilling to light a fire on the raft, we cut them up and dried them in the sun. Though not very palatable, they enabled us to economize the rest of our provisions; and the natives, and even Peter, had no objection to eat them raw.

For three days we lay totally becalmed. Fortunately we most of us had some occupation. Uncle Paul, the skipper, and I were engaged in making floats from the large nuts I spoke of. Having bored a hole, we scraped out the kernel, and then stopped up the orifice again with some resinous substance which Uncle Paul had brought for the purpose. The natives, assisted by the mate, were manufacturing spears and bows and arrows. When not thus occupied, we were engaged in fishing. Most of our hooks were small, and we could only venture to haul up moderately-sized fish with them. We had, however, one big hook with a strong line, and we hoped with it to catch a proportionately large fish. We were not disappointed. I had the line in my hand. Before long I felt a strong pull. I gave a jerk, and when I fancied that the unwary creature was firmly hooked, I began to haul away. I had, however, to call to my friends for assistance; for I thought it far more likely that the fish would pull me in, than that I should

succeed in pulling him out. Uncle Paul and the skipper then took hold of the line. Our fear was that the fish would break away, for there was not line enough to play him, and our only way of securing him was by main force. At length we got his head out of the water, when the Indians exclaimed, "Periecu! periecu!" and stooping down, and putting their fingers in the fish's gills, they hauled it up. He was upwards of three feet in length, and covered with beautiful scales—indeed, I have never seen a finer fish. Some blows on the head finally secured him. The Indians said that his flesh might be preserved by drying, but thought some days would be required for the operation. We preferred eating some of it fresh, but not raw; so we began to think of lighting a fire.

For some time we had been drifting much closer in with the forest, and we agreed that by a little exertion in rowing we might get up to some of the trees, from which we could obtain a supply of fuel. This we accomplished, and lowering our sail, and unstepping our mast, we got close in under the trees. With our axe and knives we soon got a supply of dry branches. As no place presented itself on any of the lower branches where we could light a fire, we resolved to do so on the log. Having piled up our fuel, we paddled out again into the open water. Uncle Paul had his tinder-box, and a few cherished matches—not that we were entirely dependent on them, as

the natives could always, by a little exertion, kindle a flame. We did not step our mast, which, with the sail and yard, lay alongside. Our fire was soon lighted, and a portion of our periecu was spitted and placed over it to roast. The fish appeared to be cooking famously, as we sat on the log, some at one end and some at the other. Suddenly a light wind got up, and in an instant what was our dismay to see the whole centre part of the log on fire! Up it blazed, spreading so rapidly that we had scarcely time, some seizing one article and some another, to spring overboard with our floats round our waists. Quacko in a great fright clung to Kallolo's back, where he sat chattering away, loudly expressing his annoyance at what had occurred. Maco made a dash on the half-roasted periecu, which would otherwise have run a great risk of being overdone, and leaped after us. Happily nothing of value was left behind, while our mast and sail, being in the water, were also safe. There we were, floating about round the log, which, from the fierce way the flames blazed up, would, we feared, be soon burned to the water's edge. "This must not be!" cried the skipper and Uncle Paul almost at the same time. "Pipe all hands to extinguish the fire!" Suiting the action to the word, they setting the example, we all, as we floated about on our life-buoys, began to throw water on the flames with our hands.

"Heave away, my lads! heave away, and put out

the flames!" cried Uncle Paul. Fortunately the fire had not got any real hold on the log, having fed chiefly on the dry mass of parasitic plants which thickly covered it, so that, by throwing water over it merely with the palms of our hands, we managed in a short time to put it out. Maco, who was the first to climb on to the deck, uttering a loud cry jumped off again still more rapidly, it being as yet far too hot to make a comfortable resting-place. We therefore continued for some time longer to throw up the water to cool it.

At length we again ventured on board. It looked something like the bottom of a coal barge in a rainy day; it was covered with saturated cinders, which it took us a considerable time before we could sweep off into the water. Quacko looked with much suspicion at the burned embers, as if he thought they would blaze up again, and declined leaving Kallolo's shoulders, where alone he considered himself secure. Having put our craft right, we sat down to feast on the portion of the periecu we had been cooking, and very satisfactory food it proved. We then stepped our mast, and set up the rigging, so as to be ready to proceed on our voyage as soon as the wind should again spring up. It came sooner than we expected, but instead of blowing up the stream, it came directly down, and both the skipper and Uncle Paul agreed that it was likely to continue in the same quarter for several days.

We had now run somewhat short of provisions, and

had made but inconsiderable progress on our voyage of discovery. Uncle Paul therefore proposed that we should go back to our friends, and wait till the wind should again shift to its old quarter. Unless, indeed, we could secure the log to a tree, we should be drifted back several miles. We might obtain food by climbing the trees, but we were not likely to catch any fish while we remained close to them, and we should probably, after all, have to put back in want of provisions. These arguments prevailed with the skipper. The head of the log was got round, sail was made, and we glided back at a much faster rate than we had come up against the current.

CHAPTER VIII.

ARRIVAL AT GROVE ISLAND—SEARCH FOR PROVISIONS—CAPTURE OF THE SLOTH
—SMOKED SLOTH—DEPARTURE FROM GROVE ISLAND—A FEARFUL ATTACK
—UP AN IGARAPE—THE INDIAN ENCAMPMENT.



THE sun was just setting when we reached the clump of trees where we had left our friends, and lowering our mast, we paddled on to the landing-place. As might be supposed, they were very much surprised at seeing us return, and naturally fancied that some accident had happened.

"What is the matter?" asked Arthur, who hurried down to meet us.

"Nothing the matter, my friends, only a foul wind has driven us back into port," answered the skipper, laughing. "Ya, ya! we shall sail again soon with a fair breeze, and we mean to complete our voyage the next time."

We found that everything had been going on quietly during our absence. My father had gradually recovered his strength, and Marian felt much better from being able to take a walk on the platform. A hut had been constructed for her of palm leaves, at

Arthur's suggestion. Arthur, Tim, and the black had been successful in their hunting expeditions. They had, wisely, not ventured again into the macawery, but had caught in various parts of the grove several parrots and other birds. They had again seen the sloth; but, as they did not require the creature for food, they allowed it to enjoy its existence. Its chance of life, however, with the increased numbers in the settlement, was very small; for Kallolo and Maco undertook to capture the poor animal before dawn, if they could find it. They said they could do so at that time much more easily than in daylight, when it would be awake, and could scramble off much faster than they could follow. Kallolo observed, that with a blow-pipe he could send a small dart into the body of the animal which would deprive it of life in the course of a few minutes; but having only spears and arrows, the business of catching it would take them a much longer time. The danger of shooting the sloth was, that it might fall into the water and be lost, should it be found on a bough overhanging the river. Arthur suggested that we should try to get a rope round the animal.

"We kill him first, and then make him fast," observed Kallolo. "He will hold on with his claws till him quite dead."

As the skipper was especially anxious to have a good supply of food in readiness for the voyage, it

was finally decided that the sloth should die before daylight. Arthur and I told Kallolo that we wished to assist in its capture, and he promised to call us when it was time to set out to look for the beast.

We all lay down as usual on the platform, our pillows consisting of bundles of sticks, with no other covering than the roof overhead. I was still sleeping soundly when I felt Kallolo's hand on my shoulder. "Get up, now! Time to be off!" He had previously awaked Arthur. We were immediately on our feet, and, led by the two natives, commenced our scramble among the boughs and interlacing sepos. Arthur carried one piece of rope, and I another. It was necessary to move with the greatest caution, else we might easily have had an ugly fall. Our guides moved noiselessly, for fear, as they said, of awaking their intended victim. It would certainly have gone to the furthest extremity of the grove—as far away as possible from the invaders of its native domain. I should have supposed that they would have had great difficulty in ascertaining in what direction it was to be found, had I not observed that they stopped every now and then and examined the leaves of some of the trees. At length we arrived at a large cecropia tree. We observed that some of the branches were almost stripped of their leaves, while those of others, a little further on, were only partly nibbled.

"Him not far off," whispered Kallolo. "Stay here,

me go see. Come when I call." And he and his companion silently made their way along an outspreading branch, holding their lances in their hands. The branch could not be reached from below, but I saw that another of smaller dimensions extended at no great distance above it. The Indians crept along the larger branch. I knew that the sloth was to be found under, not above, the branch, and therefore supposed that he was clinging to the smaller of the two, though I could not make him out. Presently I saw one of the natives spring up to the upper branch, and make his way along it; then he again dropped down to the lower one, while the other advanced as if to meet him. I could see their lances raised, and presently, at the same moment, they darted them down, when Kallolo shouted out, "Come on! come on!" and Arthur and I clambered along the upper branch, and, directed by Kallolo, we dropped the noose of our ropes, which he and Maco caught and passed round the lower bough, handing them up to us again. They then told us to move a little further on, and to draw the ropes tight and secure them. We did as they desired.

"We got the sloth tight now," observed Kallolo. "Him not go away till we come back in the morning." We found that the ropes had been passed under the body of the sloth, which was thus tightly secured to the tree. After this, we returned to the platform.

At daylight we again set off with Tim and Sambo, to bring down the body of the sloth. It was by this time quite dead, and had it not been fastened, would probably have fallen into the water. It was carried to the kitchen on the thick branch, where it was skinned and cut up; and we now found ourselves in possession of an ample supply of meat. I cannot say much in favour of its flesh. It was rather tough and sinewy; but under our circumstances we were very glad to get it. The only question was how it could be preserved. The skipper suggested that we should try to smoke our meat. The operation at first seemed impossible; but under his directions a large wicker-work basket was formed, which was thickly covered over with palm leaves. The meat was hung inside, and the basket was then placed over the fire, which was well supplied with fresh twigs and leaves. By continually replenishing the fuel, we kept up an ample volume of smoke, in which we not only cured sloth meat, but a number of parrots and other birds, and several fish, which we caught by allowing the log to drift out into deep water, as far as the cable would admit.

The skipper was very anxious that the whole party should accompany him on the next trip; and he asked my father to venture on board the log, assuring him that he and his daughter would be perfectly safe, and that we should thus be able to push into the interior

to a spot where we might build a vessel, and so avoid the necessity of coming back for him. My father at length consented, and active preparations were made for the voyage. Before starting, we had a grand hunt, during which we made an onslaught on the macaws, which, frightened by our numbers, and by the weapons with which we assailed them, took to flight after several had been killed, leaving their young ones at our mercy. We caught a number of other birds, and obtained a considerable supply of figs, plums, and nuts. We had, also, a general washing of clothes; though, to be sure, some of our party had but few garments which required cleansing. But cleanliness we endeavoured to maintain; which tended much, I believe, to keep us in health. Hitherto no one had suffered, except from fatigue; and that, of course, was unavoidable.

Our provisions being carefully packed, and other arrangements made, we only waited for a fair wind to recommence our voyage. We had an abundance of food. Our saucepan afforded us the means of obtaining hot water, and of boiling what required boiling. We had bows and arrows and spears to obtain more food, hooks and lines for catching fish, and two bottles of schiedam remaining; for the skipper, though very fond of it, husbanded it carefully, and resisted the temptation he felt to drink it himself. "We'll keep it, in case of the illness of any of the party," he remarked.

The wind still continued blowing down the river. It had the effect of somewhat lowering the water. This we did not desire; for while it remained at its height we could with greater ease penetrate into the interior, and we knew that even long after it had subsided we should be unable to travel over the country it had left, with any degree of safety. Again it fell calm. We might perhaps have urged our log to the westward by means of the oars; but our progress would necessarily have been so slow that it would not have been worth while to make the attempt. We waited another day, when, to the satisfaction of all hands, a light breeze from the eastward sprang up soon after we had breakfasted.

"On board now, my friends!" exclaimed the skipper; and we hastened down to our landing-place, each of us loaded with as many packages as we could carry. As before, Quacko clung to Kallolo's shoulders, while Ara perched on the head of Maco. Everything we possessed was placed in the centre of the log. Once more Uncle Paul ascended and took a glance round the platform, to see that nothing had been left behind. "And now, my friends," he said, "before we push off, let us offer up a prayer for protection against the dangers, foreseen and unforeseen, which we may have to encounter." Kneeling down and taking off his hat, Uncle Paul prayed in a firm, manly tone, all joining him in a hearty "Amen."

Rising from our knees, the oars were got out, the painter cast off, and we paddled clear of the trees : then the mast was stepped and set up with shrouds and stays, wedges being driven in to secure it more firmly. The sail was hoisted and rigged out with a boom, and away we glided up the stream. Great care had been taken, in trimming the log, to prevent the risk of its upsetting. To each person was assigned his own proper place, from which he was on no account to move, unless directed by Uncle Paul or Captain van Dunk. Further to secure the log, outriggers had been fitted on either side ; which gave it more stability, without impeding its progress. All had been done, indeed, which good sense and forethought could suggest for securing a safe voyage in our, at the best, unwieldy craft. The extreme buoyancy of the cedar wood made it far more suitable for our purpose than that of any other tree. From its natural shape, also, which was flat on the upper side, and rounded at the bottom, it nearly resembled a vessel ; and could we have hollowed it out, it might have been formed into a craft suitable for the navigation of a smooth river. We had, however, to make the best of it as it was. We had, I should have said, erected a small shed in the after-part for Marian's accommodation, which served as her sleeping-place at night, and sheltered her somewhat from the heat of the sun by day.

As before, we sailed on night and day. The craft

was somewhat less buoyant than it had been ; but as we had a fresh breeze, we made good progress, and in two days we reached the point where we had turned back. Marian was grateful for the care taken of her, and was in fair spirits ; and even our poor father became more cheerful than he had been. Soon after we had doubled the point, the wind shifted a little to the northward, blowing directly up the stream we had now entered. As in the Orinoco, the trees, with the water many feet above their roots, bounded our prospect on either side.

Day after day we sailed on, a sharp look-out being kept ahead for any danger which might appear. The chief risk was from submerged trees or floating logs ; which might have quickly upset her, had our craft struck one of them. Happily we escaped all these dangers ; and though we frequently passed very near floating logs, we did not receive any damage from them.

At length we found the river narrowing considerably ; but still no dry ground had appeared on either side,—which showed how perfectly level must be the region through which we were sailing. The wind, though it continued favourable, had fallen, and we found it necessary to keep close in by the shore, to avoid the current which we could no longer stem. Still, by keeping our paddles moving, we went ahead. So narrow had the stream become, that we thought we

must be approaching its source, when suddenly we found ourselves entering a broad lake-like expanse, the opposite shore being scarcely visible. Captain van Dunk being unwilling, for fear of being caught in a gale, to stand across the lake, kept still coasting along, in the hope, he said, of discovering either a piece of firm ground or else another stream up which we might run.

During the next night the wind was very light, and we made slower progress than we had hitherto done. I awoke just at daylight, and was sitting with Kallolo at the bow of our strange craft, over the stem of which the tack was made fast. He was employed in looking out ahead. Quacko, his constant companion, was in his arms, and I was amusing myself by talking to the monkey. "He no understand your lingo, Massa Guy," observed Kallolo. "Talkee as I do, and he know what you say." On this he uttered what seemed to me to be nothing but gibberish; but Quacko, in great delight, replied in what was evidently an imitation of his master's voice. Suddenly I saw the creature gaze into the water, and then, chattering louder than ever, it threw its arms around Kallolo's neck.

"He see something!" exclaimed the native, gazing on the smooth surface.

"Oh! what can it be?" I exclaimed.

The native did not reply. At that instant, a long

shining head rose above the surface, and came on with fearful rapidity towards the log. The Indian sat, it seemed to me, paralyzed with terror. Beyond the head appeared a long thin body; and I now saw that it was an enormous snake—"a huge anaconda." To my horror the creature, reaching the log, began to climb it, exhibiting the folds of its huge body; while its mouth was open wide enough to swallow either of us at a gulp, though it might possibly have been contented with poor Quacko, had Kallolo been willing to sacrifice his favourite.

"Fly, Massa Guy! fly!" he shouted, springing back himself, with Quacko in his arms. Our shouts aroused our sleeping companions, who sprang to their feet, Maco being the first to seize a lance and come to our assistance. The bravest man might well have been excused for not facing the hideous monster unarmed. The first impulse of every one was to spring to the after-part of our craft, as far as possible from its huge fangs. Our cries, and the row of bristling lances presented to the anaconda, made it hesitate to spring on us. Indeed, it had not as yet, I suspect, got firm hold of the log with its tail, which would have enabled it to do so. While the rest of us were presenting our lances, Maco seized a bow and sent an arrow directly down the creature's throat! With a loud hiss of rage and pain it drew back, when we all rushed forward, not without some risk of upsetting

the log, which rocked fearfully from side to side. Had we been thrown into the water, the creature would have had us at its mercy; though, with an arrow in its mouth, it would not have been able to swallow even Quacko. A second arrow, sent by Maco's unerring bow, made it uncoil its huge body and slip off into the water, when, to our infinite satisfaction, it disappeared beneath the surface. Poor Quacko still trembled all over; for his instinct told him how quickly the anaconda would have gobbled him up. We speedily recovered our equanimity. "I wish he would come on again," cried our undaunted skipper. "If he do, we shall quickly have his head off, and cook some slices of his body for dinner." I don't think he exactly meant what he said; at all events, I must have been excessively hungry before I could have eaten any of the hideous creature, though its flesh might possibly not be poisonous. I believe, indeed, that even the natives, who eat nearly everything, would not have been inclined to feed on its rank flesh.

As we had no wish to remain in the neighbourhood, we got out the oars and rowed lustily forward; and a fresh breeze springing up at about noon, we ran on at a good rate, though not even at the fastest did we ever make more than four knots an hour. Our average was perhaps about two, which gave twenty-four miles in the day. This, considering all things, was not bad progress.

We sailed on till nightfall, in vain looking for a landing-place, while between the trees we could distinguish nothing but water extending as far as the eye could reach. As the wind was light, we did not attempt to bring up, but continued on our course; a crescent moon enabling us to see our way sufficiently to avoid any dangers ahead. Uncle Paul and Captain van Dunk took it in turn to act as officer of the watch. My father and Marian were rated as passengers, and the rest of us were divided into two watches.

It may be supposed, after the visit of the anaconda, that we kept a bright look-out, lest any monster of the same species might take it in his head to come on board; and Kallolo and Maco kept their bows ready to send an arrow into the first pair of open jaws which appeared above the surface. The night, however, passed away without the appearance of any unwelcome visitor. The encounter we had had on the previous day seemed, indeed, like a horrible dream, and we could scarcely persuade ourselves of its reality. I was very glad when daylight returned, and a fresh breeze and bright sun stirred up our spirits.

We had not again attempted to light a fire on board; indeed, without stopping among the trees we could not have obtained fuel. We were therefore compelled to subsist on the dried meat and fish and the various fruits and nuts we had brought with us; cold

water being our sole beverage. Marian subsisted almost entirely on fruit and nuts, and for her sake especially I was anxious to reach dry ground, where we could cook some more wholesome provisions for her.

We had now, by our calculations, got a considerable way from the Orinoco, but had not yet found the dry ground of which we were in search; nor had as yet any mountain ranges appeared over the tops of the lofty trees surrounding us.

The noonday sun was shining with an intense splendour on the calm expanse of water over which we glided, when we saw before us an opening between the trees, through which we concluded the upper waters of the river we had been navigating flowed. The log was steered for it. It was of considerable breadth, though narrowed by the far-extending branches of the trees hanging over it, the lower portions of the stems being concealed by the water.

We sailed on: Captain van Dunk thought we should, before long, reach a part with banks considerably above the water. On either side rose magnificent trees, some to the height of one hundred and fifty feet. Among the most remarkable were the white-stemmed cecropia; the cow-tree, of still loftier growth; and the india-rubber tree, with its smooth gray bark, tall erect trunk, and thick glossy leaves: while intermixed with them appeared the assai palm, with

its slender stem, its graceful head, and its delicate green plumes; and the mirite, one of the most beautiful of the palm tribe, having abundant clusters of glossy fruit, and enormous spreading, fan-like leaves, cut into ribbons. Palms of various species predominated. The underwood was not very dense; but the sepos wove their tracery among the upper branches; some running round and round the trees, and holding them in a close embrace; others hanging from branch to branch in rich festoons, or dropping in long lines to the ground. Here, too, appeared numberless parasitic plants, with most beautiful and gorgeous flowers. Among the most lovely flowers was one of a yellow tint, apparently suspended between the stems of two trees, shining in the gloom as if its petals were of gold. In reality, as we afterwards discovered, it grows at the end of a stalk, a yard and a half long, springing from a cluster of thick leaves on the bark of a tree. Others had white and spotted blossoms; and still more magnificent than all was one of a brilliant purple colour, emitting a delicious odour. Here, too, we saw plants hanging in mid-air, like the crowns of huge pine-apples; and large climbing arums, with their dark green and arrow-head-shaped leaves, forming fantastic and graceful ornaments amid the foliage; while huge-leaved ferns and other parasites clung to the stems up to the very highest branches. These, again, were covered by creeping plants; and thus

literally parasites grew on parasites; and on these parasites, again, leaves of every form were also seen—some beautifully divided, and others of vast size and fan-like shape, like those of the cecropias; and numerous others of intermediate forms added to the countless variety.

Many of the trees bore fruit. Among the most tempting was that of the maraja, growing in large bunches. Most of the palms also had fruit; some like the cocoa-nut, others like small berries. Then there was the palmetto, with its tender succulent bud on the summit of the stem, used as a vegetable with meat. Others had bunches of bright chestnut-brown fruit hanging from between the leaves which form the crown, each bunch about a foot in length, massive and compact, like a large cluster of Hamburg grapes. Then there was another palm, bearing a greenish fruit not unlike the olive in appearance, which hung in large pendent bunches just below the leaves. There were bean-shaped pods, too, from one foot to three feet in length. The cuja-tree, which I have already mentioned, is of immense size. Its fruit is very much like that of a gourd of spherical form, with a light-green shining surface, growing from the size of an orange to that of the largest melon. It is filled with a soft white pulp, easily removed when the fruit is cut in halves. The Indians, I forgot to say, formed a number of cups and basins for us from the rind of this

fruit. From them also we had manufactured the life-buoys which I have described.

As we sailed along, numerous birds of the most gorgeous plumage were seen either resting on the boughs or flying overhead across the stream. Among them were several species of trogons and little bristle-tailed manakins. We saw also the curious black umbrella bird ; which is so called from having a hood like an umbrella spread over its head. Flocks of paroquets were seen, and bright-blue chatterers ; and now and then a lovely pompadour, having delicate white wings and claret-coloured plumage. Monkeys of various sorts were scrambling among the boughs, coming out to look at us, and chattering loudly as if to inquire why we had come into their domains. Now and then we caught sight of a sloth rolled up on a branch of an imbauba tree, on the leaves of which the creature feeds ; while butterflies of most brilliant hues and enormous dragon-flies were flitting about in the sunshine.

On and on we sailed, the passage between the trees now becoming narrower every mile we progressed, till at length they appeared almost to close us in, the branches completely interlacing overhead. Still, having gone so far, Captain van Dunk was unwilling to turn back, unless certain that there was no opening into some wider stream ; but, from the depth of the water and the absence of any strong current, he fully

believed we should meet with one. At length the branches extended so far across the passage that we were compelled to unstep the mast in order to pass under them. The sudden change from the bright glare of the open water to the solemn gloom of the forest was very remarkable. We had now to paddle slowly. We were frequently able to press our oars against the trunks of the trees, and thus to shove the log ahead. Though accustomed to tropical scenery, nothing we had before witnessed equalled the rich luxuriance of the vegetation—the numberless strange trees, and hanging plants, and creepers, and beautiful flowers of every hue, affording abundance of interest as we proceeded. Marian was delighted, and was continually crying out, “Oh, what a lovely flower!—what a graceful tree!—see that magnificent bird!—oh, what a gorgeous butterfly!” till she had exhausted her vocabulary of suitable epithets.

At length we reached a spot where the far-extending buttressed roots of an enormous tree completely impeded our progress; and steering up to it, we made our log fast, and stepped, I cannot say on shore, but on the roots of the tree. We had little doubt, indeed, that could we have penetrated through the mass of foliage, we should soon have reached dry ground. It was now time for our evening meal, and therefore, before proceeding further, we sat down to partake of it. The captain intended, if possible, after-

wards to try to work the log through by towing, or else to build a small raft, and, with one or two companions, explore the passage still further on.

We had a number of spectators at our repast ; for no sooner were we quietly seated, than troops of monkeys, attracted by the strange spectacle we presented—to their eyes, at all events—came from every side through the forest, swinging from bough to bough, or scrambling along the sepos, to have a look at us. There they sat above our heads, chattering away as if talking of us and making their observations. Quacko looked up, and answered them in their own language ; at which they seemed very much surprised. Some were induced, by what he said, I suppose, to come down much closer ; and had we been so inclined, we might have shot several with our arrows. That, however, would have been a treacherous return for the confidence they showed ; and we did not, happily for them, require food. I very much doubt, had such been the case, that we should have allowed them to escape.

Kallolo and Maco, observing that we had no fruit remaining, volunteered to make their way into the forest, to try to find some. Uncle Paul, for Marian's sake, accepted their offer. It required great agility and practical experience for any one to scramble among the interlacing boughs and network of sepos, without the almost certainty of tumbling into the water. They

went off armed with their spears, and their long knives stuck in their girdles, saying that they would soon make their appearance again. We meantime, having finished the more substantial part of our meal, scrambled up to the huge roots of the tree where we had first landed, and sat down to await their return.

Uncle Paul, Captain van Dunk, and Peter talked over their plans. They did not conceal from themselves the difficulties of their project; but still, like brave men, they resolved to accomplish it. Though their saw was too small to cut out the planks of the proposed vessel, they might obtain them by splitting up trees with wedges, and then smoothing them down with the axe. Though they had no nails, the planks might be secured to the ribs with tree nails or wooden pegs. "Ya, ya!" exclaimed the brave skipper for the hundredth time; "where there's a will there's a way. We will do it, we will do it; never fear." His confidence raised all our spirits.

The day drew on, but the two natives did not appear, and we began to fear that they must have met with some accident, or lost their way. One thing was certain, we should have to spend another night on our log, instead of, as we had hoped, on dry ground under the shelter of leafy huts, which we had proposed building. My father's great wish, for Marian's sake, was to return as soon as possible to civilized parts. He said something to that effect.

"Oh, don't think about me, papa," exclaimed Marian; "I really enjoy this sort of life; only I hope that we shall not meet with another anaconda, or boa, or any of those venomous serpents which are said to frequent this region."

"I trust indeed that we shall not, my child," said our father; "but there are other dangers I fear for you, though I pray that you may be preserved from them also."

"We will not talk of dangers nor of difficulties," observed Uncle Paul; "the great thing is to face them bravely when they come."

My father remarked that it was time to return to our log, and to make arrangements for passing the night while there was daylight, as we should find the darkness much greater under the shelter of the trees than we had found it in the open part of the river.

I had just got on my feet and was looking up the stream, when I observed a bright light burst forth from among the trees at a considerable distance. I called the attention of Uncle Paul to it, who was sitting near me. He also got up and looked in the direction to which I pointed.

"It must be produced by a fire," he observed. "It is either just kindled on the branches of some high tree or else on ground rising considerably above the stream. Can Kallolo and Maco have got there and kindled it as a signal to us? For my part, I confess I

cannot make it out?" The rest of the party now got up and looked in the direction in which we were gazing. They were greatly puzzled.

"Can the fire have been lighted by natives?" asked Arthur. "Some of the tribes which inhabit these regions are accustomed to form their dwellings among the trees, I have heard; if so, we must be on our guard. It will be better, at all events, to avoid them; for though it is possible they may prove friendly, they may resent the intrusion of strangers into their territory, and attack us."

Uncle Paul agreed with Arthur that in all probability the fire was lighted by natives. "They cannot, however, as yet have seen us," he remarked, "and it might be wiser to retreat while we have time, and to try to find another passage."

"I cannot agree with you there," observed Captain van Dunk. "We have no reason to fear the natives, who are poor, miserable creatures; and as they believe that white men never go without fire-arms, they will not venture to attack us."

"But, captain, if they find that we have no fire-arms, they will know that we are at their mercy, and may easily overwhelm us by numbers," observed Arthur.

"But we have our spears, bows, and arrows, and we shall cut some stout cudgels, with which we could easily drive away such miserable savages as they are."

“Suppose they possess the deadly blow-pipe, with its little poisoned darts, they may attack us without giving us a chance of reaching them,” said Arthur.

“I am afraid that Arthur is right,” remarked Uncle Paul. “It would be folly to expose ourselves to danger if it can be avoided.”

The discussion was still going on when we caught sight of two figures approaching through the fast increasing gloom. Could they be the savages of whom we were talking? I confess that I felt very uncomfortable,—not so much for myself as for Marian and my father; and for the first time since we reached the Orinoco I began to wish that we were safe among civilized people. I suspect that my companions shared my fears. No one spoke. At length our anxiety was set at rest by hearing the voices of Kallolo and Maco. They soon joined us, bringing a number of ripe purple plums, and some bunches of the delicious maraja, the fruit of several species of palms, which I may as well here say afforded an acceptable supper to all the party. We eagerly asked if they had seen any Indians.

“We have,” answered Kallolo; “but they are a long way off, and as they will not wander from their encampment during the night, we may, if necessary, avoid them. We will, however, first learn if they are friends or foes. If they are friends, they may assist us with their canoes in getting through the passage; but if they are foes, we must try to steal by them without being seen.”

We had now all collected on the log, and Marian having retired to her cabin, we sat down to discuss the best plan of proceeding.

"I see we must do what I before proposed," said the skipper. "We will build a small raft, and Peter and I, with Maco and Sambo, will endeavour to push through the passage while you all remain concealed from the natives behind these thick trees. Should we get through, I will send Maco back to guide you; and you must build two other small rafts, which will be sufficient to carry you."

Uncle Paul did not at first seem inclined to agree with the skipper. He was unwilling that our party should separate; for, should the natives discover us, and prove hostile, they were more likely to attack a small number than a large one. At the same time, he acknowledged that by remaining on the log we might be able to retreat on it down the stream should we be attacked, and, at all events, still have some chance of saving our lives.

The skipper had at first proposed forming the raft immediately, and embarking on it during the night, so as to pass the neighbourhood of the Indian encampment before daylight; but so great was the darkness in the confined spot where we were, that we soon found it would be impossible to commence our building operations till the return of day, and he was therefore compelled to put off his expedition till the next night.

CHAPTER IX.

HOWLING MONKEYS—A BEAUTIFUL SCENE—THE OURUPIRA—WE MAKE A RAFT
—CAPTAIN VAN DUNK AND HIS COMPANIONS DEPART ON IT—VISIT THE
INDIAN ENCAMPMENT—WHITE NAKARI—ARRIVAL OF MACO—START ON A
LONG SWIM.



WE kept a vigilant watch during the night, with the oars ready to shove off, should by chance any of the Indians approach us. Kallolo took post on the roots of the tree I have before described, whence we had at first seen the light which had given us an intimation of the neighbourhood of the savages, that he might give us timely warning should any of them quit their encampment and come towards us. Still there was but little probability of being disturbed during the hours of darkness.

Scarcely had the sun sunk behind the trees when a deep gloom pervaded the surrounding atmosphere; and from a distance came the most fearful howlings, echoing through the forest.

“Oh, surely the savages are upon us,” I could not help exclaiming.

“No, Massa Guy, no fear of that,” answered Kallolo.

“Dey only howling monkeys, which are shouting to each oder from de top branches of de trees, asking each oder how dem are dis fine ebening.”

After this assurance, the other noises which came out of the forest did not create so much feeling of alarm. I knew they were only the cries of animals or birds or insects, all of which were adding their voices to the wild, and certainly not harmonious, concert. Flocks of parrots and blue macaws flew overhead, the different kinds of cawing and screaming of the various species making a terrible discord. Then arose the strangely sounding call of the cicada, or cricket, one of the largest kind, perched high on the trees, setting up a most piercing chirp. It began with the usual harsh jarring tone of its tribe, rapidly becoming shriller, until it ended in a long and loud whistling note. Comparatively small as are these wonderful performers, their voices made a considerable item in the evening concert. Before they had ceased, the tree-frogs chimed in with their “Quack, quack! drum, drum! hoo, hoo!” accompanied by melancholy night-jars, which for long kept up their monotonous cries.

While we were seated, the whole air above our heads suddenly became bright and glaring with lights of various hues; now darting here, now there; now for a moment obscured only to burst forth again with greater brilliancy. These beautiful lights were caused

by fire-flies and fire-beetles. The lights of the former were red, and bright as those of the brightest candle; and being alternately emitted and concealed, each of the tiny flames performing its own part in the mazy dance, they produced a singularly beautiful spectacle. The fire-flies, however, disappeared shortly afterwards, when a number of large beetles, called elaters, took their place, displaying both red and green lights. The red glare, like that of a lamp, alternately flashed and vanished, as the insect turned its body in flight; and now and then a green light was displayed. The mingling of the two colours, red and green, in the evolutions of flight totally surpasses my power of description. We caught several, and had we possessed an uncoloured glass bottle we might have made a lantern which would have afforded us sufficient light to work by. Even through the thick glass of a schiedam bottle a strong light was emitted, but scarcely sufficient for our purpose, though it enabled us to see our way about the log.

After some time all was silent, then suddenly came a loud yell, or scream, uttered probably by some defenceless fruit-eating animal which had been pounced upon by a tiger-cat or the stealthy boa-constrictor. It required the exercise of a considerable amount of nerve to keep up our spirits during those dark hours of the night. Now and then there came also a crash, resounding far through the wilderness, as some huge bough, or perhaps

an entire tree, its roots loosened by the flood, fell into the water, striking the neighbouring trees with its branches in its descent. Most of these sounds, however, we could account for. At length, as we all lay awake, a noise reached our ears which made several of our party start up. I can describe it only as like the clang of an iron bar struck against a hard hollow tree, followed by a piercing cry. As it was not repeated, the dead silence which followed tended to heighten the unpleasant impression it had produced.

"What can it be?" I asked Kallolo, who had just returned on board and was sitting by me.

"Dat, Massa Guy? Dat de voice of de curupira. He bery bad man, with long shaggy hair, and live in de trees. He neber let any one see him, but walk about all night, doing all the harm he can. Often he comes down to de plantations to steal de mandioca, and carry off young children when he can. Him got bright red face, and feet like de stag."

"But if no one has seen him, how can you tell that he has got red face, cloven feet, and shaggy hair?" I asked.

"Ah, Massa Guy, that is more than I know; but my fader tell me so, his fader tell him,—so I suppose some one saw him long, long ago."

"I only hope, then, that he will not come and pay us a visit," I remarked.

"I hope not, massa," said Kallolo, shuddering and

looking round into the darkness as if he just then thought that such a thing was by no means improbable.

Notwithstanding the dangerous position in which we were placed, I at length dropped off to sleep. When I awoke, the day was beginning to dawn; the birds were again astir; the cicadæ had commenced their music; flocks of parrots and macaws, and other winged inhabitants of the forest, were passing overhead in countless numbers, seeking their morning repast; beautiful long-tailed and gilded moths, like butterflies, were flying over the tree-tops; the sky had assumed the loveliest azure colour, across which were drawn streaks of thin white clouds with Nature's most delicate touch. The varied forms of the trees, imperceptible during the gloom of night, now appeared, the smaller foliage contrasting with the large, glossy leaves of the taller trees, and the feathery, fan-shaped fronds of the palms.

The air, for a short time, felt cool and refreshing; but almost before the sun had gilded the topmost boughs of the trees, the heat began to increase and give indication of a sultry day. All hands were speedily on foot. The skipper led the way on to the roots of the trees (for I must not say, on to the shore), followed by Peter and the rest of his crew, and began to hew away at the smaller palms and other trees which they thought would serve to form the proposed raft. Tree after tree was cut down; but the felling of each occupied some time. Arthur, Tim, and I assisted in

towing them out to the log, where we arranged them alongside each other, ready to receive the cross-pieces by which the whole were to be bound together. Trees somewhat lighter, cut into lengths, were selected for the latter purpose. We looked out for the Indian encampment, but from no point we could reach was it visible ; and we concluded, therefore, that we were not likely to be seen by any of the natives. Although a description of the operations we were employed in can be given in a few words, they occupied the whole day. After the logs had been cut we had to collect a quantity of the more flexible vines with which to bind them together ; and this also took us a good deal of time. Thus, though we got over our meals as quickly as possible, it was again night before the raft was completed. Some long poles for propelling it had also been cut and shaped.

The skipper contemplated the work with evident satisfaction. "There, my friends," he said, "this will carry more than half of our party ; and if half of you will consent to embark, I will stop and assist in making another like it, so that we may all proceed together. I don't like the thought of leaving you behind."

Uncle Paul and my father, however, firmly declined the skipper's offer. "I would much rather that you should go forward, Captain van Dunk, and explore the way ; and should you be successful in finding an eligible spot for camping on and building a vessel, you could

send back for us, and we would then construct one or more rafts for the voyage. The dangers of the expedition are too great for Marian and her father to encounter, unless with a definite object in view."

"Well, well," answered the captain, "I trust that we shall meet again ere long. Now, my friends, we must go on board, and shove off."

When this was said we were seated at supper. As soon as it was over, the various articles which the skipper intended to take with him were placed on board the raft. Shaking us all by the hand, he and his crew stepped on to it, each armed with a long pole, which assisted to steady them and at the same time to push on the raft. We did not cheer, as we might have done under other circumstances, for fear that our voices should reach the Indians, at no great distance, so in perfect silence our friends shoved off into the middle of the stream. Darkness having come on, they were speedily lost to sight.

I had from the first contemplated the possibility of making an excursion through the forest, in order to ascertain, if possible, the exact position of the Indian encampment. There could be little doubt that it was constructed as ours had been at the grove on the Orinoco,—high up on the branches of some enormous tree, or on a platform supported by the stems of several trees; which is the way, Kallolo told me, the Indians inhabiting the region nearer the mouth of the

river form their habitations. Arthur and I had been talking the matter over, and we proposed it to Kallolo. He said that he was quite ready to go alone, but that if we wished to accompany him he should have no objection. Could we have secured a band of elaters to go before us, we might, without difficulty, have found our way; but as neither they nor the fire-flies could be depended on, we should have to make the expedition in darkness. There was, however, a bright moon in the sky, which, provided we kept along the edge of the river, would give us sufficient light. The only creatures we had to fear were the anacondas; but Kallolo averred that they were not often found in narrow streams, and that the alligators always forsook the flooded region and went further up the country, where they could find sunny banks to bask on during the day, and a more ample supply of food. We mentioned our wishes to Uncle Paul and my father. They at first objected, but on Kallolo's assuring them that there was no great danger, and that he would take good care of us, they consented to let us go, provided we did not extend our explorations to any great distance. Tim would have liked to go also, but Uncle Paul desired him to remain to assist him should his services be required. Accordingly, each of us taking a long pole as a weapon of defence, as well as to assist in making our way along the fallen logs and roots of the trees, we set out. Kallolo led, I went next, and

Arthur followed. We carried also a long piece of rope, one end of which Kallolo held in his hand, and the other was fastened round Arthur's waist, while I secured myself by a separate piece to the middle. Should either of us slip into the water, we could thus easily be hauled out again.

I knew very well that our expedition would be a hazardous one, but I was scarcely prepared, I confess, for the difficulties we encountered and the fatigue we had to go through. Without Kallolo's guidance we should certainly not have been able to accomplish it. Sometimes we had to leap from root to root ; at others, to walk along a fallen log, raised several feet above the surface ; and often we had to wade in the water up to our knees, with the risk every moment of being soused overhead in it. Now and then we had to climb a tree. We were keeping all the while on the east side of the stream, as it was that on which we expected to find the encampment. Kallolo advanced cautiously, giving us time to obtain a firm footing before he again moved forward. Sometimes we were all three walking together along a fallen trunk, then we had to cling to the huge buttressed roots of a tree.

We had gone on in this way for a considerable time, when we saw before us a wide space of water, which it would be necessary to cross ere we could again reach another mass of trees, over whose boughs we hoped to make our onward way. Kallolo sounded it with his

pole. "We may, I think, wade across it," he said; "though it may be better to swim, lest we strike our feet against any stems remaining in the ground." We agreed to follow him, though I confess I had no great fancy for swimming through that ink-like water, and could not help fearing lest some monster lying at the bottom might rise up and seize us. However, it had to be done, unless we should make up our minds to return.

"Are you ready to go?" he asked.

"Yes, yes," answered Arthur.

Kallolo entered the water and struck out. We followed, keeping close behind him and trailing our poles by our sides. I did my best to keep the end of mine down, so that any creature at the bottom might seize hold of it instead of my legs. Arthur said that he was doing the same; but Kallolo appeared to have no apprehensions on the subject. We soon reached a branch almost touching the water. We scrambled on to it, and then without difficulty made good progress, holding on to the hanging sepos amid which we passed. We had gone some way when my foot struck on a slimy substance, and I heard a loud hiss as I felt it glide from beneath me and splash into the water below. I knew that I had trodden on a snake, and was thankful that it had not sprung up and bitten me. I told Arthur.

"I hope we shall not meet with another," he an-

swered calmly. "It was one of the things we had to expect."

The only object we had to guide us was the light from the Indian encampment, of which we occasionally caught glimpses. It seemed to be much further off than we had supposed. Indeed, sometimes I fancied that it was no nearer than when first we started! Occasionally I felt almost sorry that I had attempted the expedition. Then I remembered the importance of ascertaining the exact position of the encampment, and its distance from the river.

Sometimes, as we went along, we disturbed huge frogs, which were seated on the low boughs and the floating logs, and which went off with loud splashes into the water. The croakings of others were heard on every side. Frequently a huge bat or bird of night flitted by. The wings of the former fanned our faces, while the latter uttered a harsh croak or shriek as it flew through the gloom. Generally all around us was silent and dark, an oppressive gloom pervading the atmosphere, except when we passed through a swarm of fire-flies or elaters, as we now and then did.

At length as we advanced we saw a light directly before us, and considerably above the level over which we were passing. We were anxious to get as near to it as we could without being seen, so as to ascertain its distance from the river. We went on some way further, when, to our surprise, we came upon a

stream, which we found running between us and the Indian camp (for so I may call it, for want of a better name). On we crept in silence, till, crawling along a bough which hung just above the water, we came full in sight of it. We now discovered, what I had before conjectured, that it was a platform erected upon the branches of an enormous tree. In the centre burned a fire, around which some thirty or forty natives were seated, while we could distinguish others scattered about,—some on the branches, and others on a mass of logs which formed a natural bridge at no great distance from us. The light of the fire above showed us two men standing on it. We dared scarcely move lest they should see us. What they were about we could not ascertain, but it seemed to us that they were watching for some one. Could they by any means have discovered our approach, I thought it would not take them many minutes to cross the stream and make their way to us. We could see no canoes. With a canoe they might have speedily overtaken us without our having the slightest chance of escape. Had Captain van Dunk and his companions come this way, they must to a certainty have fallen into the hands of the savages. We gazed up at the platform, and everywhere around—the figures of natives alone met our sight. I had been standing a little way behind my companions, who now drew back. I asked them what they thought about the matter.

"This is not the main stream," answered Kallolo. "We must use great caution in proceeding, as it cannot be far off; but I hope, notwithstanding, that the captain managed to pass by without being seen. We must remember, when we attempt to make the passage, to keep to the right, which will carry us away from this spot."

Arthur was of Kallolo's opinion; he acknowledged that he should feel very anxious till we had got a good distance from the encampment. It could scarcely be supposed that the savages were without canoes; and should they by any means discover that strangers were near them, they would probably follow us.

Having now gained all the information we required, we agreed that it was time to return, and accordingly set out, Kallolo leading, as before. How he managed to guide us was more than I could discover, for I felt very sure that I should immediately have lost my way, unless I had turned constantly to observe the position of the camp. He went on steadily, without once, as far as I saw, looking round. He took a different course to that by which we had come; and though longer, it seemed to me that we had fewer difficulties to encounter than before. Perhaps we were more accustomed to them. We had, however, twice to swim across portions of the flooded land. Had it not been for the fear of being caught by an anaconda or alligator, this would have been the less fatiguing mode of

proceeding ; but as we made our way through the dark waters, I could not avoid having very uncomfortable feelings on the subject. In some places the water was sufficiently shallow to enable us to wade without difficulty, showing that the land must here be much higher, and giving us hopes that we should, before long, reach dry ground. The most difficult work was walking along the submerged logs, for we had carefully to balance ourselves, to prevent falling off. At the end we had generally to climb up the roots or branches, and make our way along the low boughs, sometimes having to swing ourselves off from one to the other by means of the sepos. Several times the boughs threatened to give way beneath our feet ; and once Arthur and I were plunged into a mass of rotten brushwood and water, where we should certainly have lost our lives had not Kallolo quickly hauled us out again with the rope. At length, thoroughly fatigued, we saw, just as the dawn was breaking, the log and our friends on it, who were anxiously looking out for us, as we had been absent much longer than they had expected us to be.

We were thankful to take off our wet trousers and shirts, and cover ourselves up in Uncle Paul's and my father's cloaks while our own clothes were hung up to dry. This did not take long in the hot air. We were too tired to eat, and therefore lay down to sleep till breakfast time ; while Kallolo, who was well

accustomed to that sort of work, gave an account of our expedition to my father and Uncle Paul.

When I awoke, I found breakfast prepared ; and putting on my clothes, I sat down to eat it. We had ventured to light a small fire, as Kallolo assured us that the Indians would not observe the smoke at the distance they were from us. A decoction from some leaves, which served us as tea, had been boiled in the iron pot. I could have drunk any quantity of it, but found myself utterly unable to eat anything. Arthur was much in the same state ; indeed, he felt even worse than I did. Our friends became very anxious, for, without shelter or any remedies against disease, should we become really ill the matter would be very serious. Kallolo, seeing the condition we were in, immediately set to work and cut a quantity of palm branches, with which, aided by Tim, he formed a sort of arbour to shelter us from the sun. He then started off, and returned shortly with the fruit of a certain palm—a decoction from which, he said, would afford a cooling drink—which he immediately put on the fire. After allowing the liquid to cool, he gave each of us a large cupful, and poured the remainder into one of the bottles formed from the cuja fruit, his countenance meanwhile expressing deep concern.

All day we lay, our heads racked with pain. Had we been called upon to make any exertion, we should have found it impossible. Uncle Paul proposed to

bleed us, but Kallolo entreated him not to do so, saying that if we persevered in following his plan of cure we should soon be well. We drank cupful after cupful of the decoction he had prepared ; and towards evening the pain left my head, and though I felt a peculiar lassitude such as I had never before experienced, I had no other disagreeable sensation. By the next morning both Arthur and I were perfectly well, and able to do justice to the portions of fish and flesh cooked for us, and the ample supply of fruit Kallolo had collected in the forest. This was the only time during the period of our expedition that I had the slightest attack of illness.

“ I am so thankful that you are both well again ! ” exclaimed Marian, as she sat near us. “ I was so miserable all yesterday ; and thought how dreadful it would be should you die, and our father and uncle be left with me alone. I am not exactly tired of this sort of life, but I do heartily wish that we were safe again among friends.”

“ It is better than being shut up in the Inquisition, at all events,” said Arthur ; “ though for your sake I wish we were safe on shore. However, perhaps before long we may reach dry land ; and then, if the brave skipper is able to carry out his intentions, we may soon get away. If we can reach a Dutch settlement, we shall be safe ; for when the Hollanders hear that we have been flying from the Inquisition, they will, I

am very sure, give us a friendly reception. You know how bravely they fought to overthrow it in their own country, under the brave William of Orange, when Philip of Spain and his cruel general the Duke of Alva tried to impose it on them. They have never forgotten those days ; and their country is as purely a Protestant one as Old England and her colonies."

I heard my poor father sigh ; he was, I have no doubt, regretting having ventured under a government supporting that horrible system, so calculated to destroy all true religious principles, and to make the people become fanatics or hypocrites. Arthur heard him, and changed the subject, as he knew it must be one which could not fail to be painful.

We were anxiously awaiting the return of Maco, whom we hoped would bring us tidings of Captain van Dunk.

The heat, as may be supposed, was very great, for the sun having gained its greatest altitude, its rays fell down on the narrow stream undisturbed by the slightest breath of air. To shield us somewhat from it, Kal-lo and Tim had collected a number of branches, and formed a complete arbour over our heads, in addition to the bed-places they had before made. We could thus lie in the shade, shielded from the burning sun. It served also to hide us from the view of any natives who might approach the neighbourhood. The lower part was left open, so as to allow the air to circulate

freely ; and we could thus see the forest on either side.

We were all seated together ; but most of us feeling drowsy, were disinclined for conversation. I was lying down near Marian, when she touched me, whispering, "Look, look, Guy, at those curious creatures !" I turned my eyes in the direction she pointed, and saw, peering at us from among the boughs of a neighbouring tree, a whole tribe of almost tailless monkeys. They were curious-looking creatures, with faces of a vivid scarlet hue ; their bodies, about eighteen inches long, were clothed with long, straight, shining, whitish hair ; their heads were nearly bald, and sprinkled over with a short crop of thin gray hair ; whilst around their ruddy countenances were bushy whiskers of a sandy colour, leading under the chin. Though almost destitute of tails, they seemed to be active little creatures, as we saw them running up and down the larger branches ; not leaping, however, from one to the other, as do most of the monkey tribes which we had seen. Several of them, evidently mothers, were carrying young ones on their backs ; but they moved about quite as rapidly as the rest. We remained perfectly quiet, watching them at their gambols. Now and then several of them would come and have a look at us, and then run off—as if to give an account to their companions of the strange creatures they had seen. Soon others would come and gaze at us with

their reddish-yellow eyes, evidently somewhat doubtful as to what we were, and as to our power to harm them; again to run off to a distance, jabbering and shrieking in the greatest excitement. Prompted by curiosity, others would quickly appear,—especially mammas, accompanied by delicate-looking monkeys whom we took to be unmarried young ladies. Indeed, they showed that curiosity affects the breasts of female monkeys as powerfully as it is said to do that of human beings of the fair sex. They afforded us great amusement; till at last, after an hour or so, Uncle Paul, who had been sleeping, suddenly started up and gave a loud sneeze, when they all scampered up a tree; and as we looked up, we could see them making their way along the topmost branches, till they disappeared in the distance.

Kallolo told us that this species of monkey is known as the white uakari. Marian said that she should like to have one. He replied that they were very difficult to catch, and that unless taken very young, being of a sensitive disposition, they speedily pine and die. He told us that the native, when he wishes to catch one alive, goes forth with his blowpipe and arrows tipped with diluted woorali poison. This poison, though it produces a deadly effect on all animals, as well as on the natives, who exist without salt, has very little effect on salt-consuming Europeans. Salt, indeed, is the only antidote to the poison. The hunter, there-

fore, when in search of the white uakari, supplies himself with a small quantity of salt. As soon as he has shot the monkey, he follows it through the forest, till, the poison beginning to take effect, it falls from the tree. He takes care to be close under the bough to catch it in his arms, and immediately puts a pinch of salt into its mouth. In a short time the little creature revives ; and in most instances not appearing to be much the worse for the poison, it is led away captive. A young one thus entrapped speedily becomes tame, and is much prized, as an interesting pet, by the white inhabitants. Kallolo promised, as soon as he could manufacture a blowpipe, to try and catch a young uakari for Marian ; and he said that he was sure, under the instruction of Quacko, it would soon become civilized.

Hitherto Quacko and the ara parrot had been our chief sources of amusement. The two creatures had become great friends, though Quacko now and then showed an inclination to pick the feathers out of his companion's back ; but when he made the attempt, she resented it by a severe peck on his head—and one day caught the tip of his tail, and gave it a bite which was calculated to teach him not to behave in the same manner again. Whenever we asked Kallolo to try and catch us some more pets, he invariably replied, " Wait till I can make my blowpipe and some poison, and then I will bring you as many creatures as you may wish for.

Ah, the blowpipe is a wonderful instrument ; it will serve to kill anything, from a big tapir or a fierce jaguar or puma, down to the smallest manakin or humming-bird."

Frequently, during the day, Kallolo crept from our shelter and took a look round in the direction of the Indian camp, to make sure that none of the savages were approaching. He was certain, he said, that they had no canoes, or they would have found us out before this. Just at sunset he came back with the alarming intelligence that he had seen an Indian in the distance, who was evidently making his way towards us. He advised us to remain perfectly quiet, so that, unless he should really come close to the log, we might escape being seen. "As I saw but one man, he cannot be coming with any hostile intention ; though he might possibly, should he discover us, go back and return with his companions," he added. We all accordingly withdrew within our leafy arbour, where, as the night was already casting its gloomy mantle over us, there was little probability of our being seen.

We remained without speaking, for fear the stranger might hear our voices. The sounds I have before described began to issue from the forest, preventing us from hearing the noise he might make in approaching. We had begun to hope that he had turned back, when suddenly a voice close to us exclaimed, "Halloa ! what has become of them all ?" and to our great satisfaction

we recognized it as that of Maco. Uncle Paul immediately called to him ; and he soon scrambled on board, exhibiting infinite satisfaction at finding us. He had, he told us, many adventures to narrate, in addition to a message of importance which he brought from the captain. We replied that we were eager to hear what he had to say.

"I must be a very short time about it," he answered, "as the captain begs that you will come forward at once and join him. You must know that we found the voyage on the raft far more difficult than we had expected, on account of the number of large roots projecting into the stream, and the boughs which hung over it, almost close to the surface of the water. We frequently had to jump off our raft, and, where the water was shallow enough, drag it along. At other times we had to swim by its side, or push it before us ; and even thus we had often difficulty in getting along. We believe that we were not discovered by the natives ; at all events, they did not follow us. Twice we caught sight of them when we were in the water, and we could not account for their not having seen us. We found the channel extended for several miles, seldom being wider than it is here, and often much narrower. At its termination it widens into a succession of lakes ; but for a long way we could not find firm ground. At length, after pushing up a stream, we reached a bank where the forest was

much less dense than we had hitherto found it ; and going on still further, we arrived at an open space of small size, exactly such as the captain was in search of. We here landed our stores ; and he and Peter having begun to put up a hut, and to mark such trees as he considered would serve for a vessel, he sent Sambo and I back on the raft to the end of the narrow passage. I there left Sambo, to take care of the raft, and to catch fish and kill some birds for food, while I swam on here with the aid of my floats. Considering the difficulties we met with in getting through the passage on the raft, the captain advises that you should all make your way along it by swimming. We saw no alligators, which are the only creatures to be dreaded, and the captain is certain that they have all gone further into the interior ; at all events, that none inhabit the passage. I am now well acquainted with the way ; and if we pass the Indian encampment during the hours of darkness, we shall run no risk of being discovered. Should you decline coming on in the way I mention, the captain advises that you should go back on the log, and try to find the entrance of a much wider and deeper channel, which he is sure exists some way to the northward ; and it is by this channel that the captain hopes to carry his vessel, when built, into the waters of the Orinoco."

We all listened eagerly to Maco's account ; of which I merely give a brief translation, for, of course, the

language he used would be quite unintelligible to my readers.

Uncle Paul was very doubtful about the plan proposed, and my father was very unwilling to expose Marian to so much risk. She herself, however, declared that she was quite willing to undertake the expedition. Both Kallolo and Maco very strongly urged that we should do as the captain advised. Were we to return down the stream on the log, a long time might be spent; and we should very likely fall in with other savages, who might be even less peacefully disposed than those in the camp near us. Their habits we had as yet had no opportunity of ascertaining. They might possibly be friendly, though, with the uncertainty, it was prudent to try and avoid them altogether. One thing was certain, they were not addicted to roaming about, or they could not have failed to find us; and we might certainly hope to pass by them unobserved. These arguments at length prevailed with my father and Uncle Paul, and they agreed to set out. The few things we had with us were done tightly up and placed on floats, which Kallolo and Maco agreed to push before them. Marian's gown and our jackets were done up in the same way, so that she only retained a tight-fitting under-dress, which would not impede her progress, while we wore our trousers. These arrangements being made, we fitted on our floats, of which each of us had four; and they

were sufficient to keep our shoulders and arms well out of the water, while at the same time they did not impede our progress.

We took our last meal on board the log which had carried us so well ; then waiting for some time, till we believed that the natives would have retired to rest, we stood ready to set out on our dangerous and novel expedition. In no other climate could we have undertaken it. The water was here so warm, even at night, that there was no risk of our limbs becoming cramped by being long immersed in it ; nor were we likely to suffer in any other way. Really, for the sake of protection from the cold, garments were altogether unnecessary ; and it is not surprising that the dark-skinned natives should consider them an encumbrance, and generally dispense with them altogether.

“Are you all ready ?” asked Uncle Paul.

“Yes !” was the general answer ; “all ready.”

It was settled that he should take the command, though Maco acted as our guide. The Indian, slipping off into the water, struck out up the centre of the channel ; our uncle and father followed ; Kallolo went next, carrying Quacko on his head, with Tim, who had charge of Ara on his ; Marian and I, with Arthur to support her in case of need, brought up the rear. The floats bore us up admirably ; and we found swimming a far more easy mode of progression than

we should have found walking over the logs through the mighty forest to be.

We went on, keeping close together, without speaking, lest by any chance our voices might be heard by the Indians, whom we were anxious to avoid. Our progress was slow, of course, as the best swimmers had to wait for the rest. The time appeared to me to be very long; and I fancied that we had been swimming for more than an hour, when in reality we had not been half that time in the water. We could not, however, avoid every now and then looking up to the huge fire of the Indians, which could be discerned burning brightly in the distance; but instead of getting nearer to it, as I expected that we should, it became less and less distinct, and at last was to be seen almost behind us. I knew that we were turning off in an opposite direction; still we were too near the danger not to wish to get further from it. On our left I observed the mouth of a channel which we had reached on a former night, and which led, I have no doubt, close under the Indian encampment. Had we not possessed Maco as a guide, we should very naturally have gone up it, and thus found ourselves close to our supposed enemies.

I was already beginning to feel somewhat fatigued, and I was afraid that Marian must be tired. I asked her how she felt.

"I should much like to get a short rest, if it is

possible," she answered; "but I can go on longer, though my arms and legs are beginning to ache."

Just then Maco, who had been some way ahead, returned; and having spoken a few words to Uncle Paul, he led us to the side of the stream, where we found the buttress roots, as I have before described, of a large tree projecting into the water. We all climbed on it; and Arthur and I assisted Marian to a spot where she could rest with comparative comfort. We sat down by her side, but prudence prevented us from speaking above a whisper. We waited for some time, then Uncle Paul asked her if she was ready to go on.

"Yes, yes!" she answered. "I already begin to feel more like a fish; and I think, after a little experience I shall be as much at home in the water as on dry ground."

This answer showed that she was in good spirits; and once more the whole party slipped into the channel. We proceeded up it much in the same way as before. Quacko and Ara would have objected to this sort of progress, had they not been perched on the heads of those whom they knew to be their friends. There they sat with perfect composure, supposing that all must be right, and, I dare say, thinking themselves beings of no little importance.

We had gone on for some time, when I perceived that the gloom of night was gradually disappearing, the light of dawn taking its place. I describe the

change from night to day just as it appeared to me at the time. Looking up, I saw that the tops of the trees were already tinged with the glow of the rising sun. Rapidly it descended; and at length the trees, the tall stems and winding sepos, the rich foliage, and the calm water, were bathed in the warm light of day. No scene could have been more beautiful. Our spirits rose, and, strange as it may seem, I could scarcely help shouting out with delight. On one side of us floated a number of magnificent water-lilies with leaves of prodigious size, which I will afterwards describe. They were such as we had never seen before.

Maco, who had gone ahead, was seated on a bough almost concealed by the foliage, beckoning us to come on. At that moment Uncle Paul pointed upwards towards the left; and looking over my shoulder, I saw through an opening in the forest a platform raised between several palm-trees, with a number of natives on it, while others, with spears in their hands, were standing on the lower boughs engaged in spearing either fish or turtles. They were apparently so occupied, that we hoped they had not seen us.

Although we had already been swimming for some time, we could not venture to rest as we had intended doing; we therefore pushed on as rapidly as we could. In a short time Marian confessed that she could go no further. We had, fortunately, a small piece of rope,

which the skipper had left us. It was uncoiled from the float which supported it, and one end fastened to Marian's floats ; Kallolo taking the other end, towed her forward, while Arthur and I swam by her side. We were thus able to proceed much faster than before.

At last we all got so tired, that even Arthur and I could not help crying out that we should like to rest ; and as we had for some time lost sight of the Indians, there appeared to be no danger in our doing so. Reaching a wide-spreading bough, therefore, interlaced by a number of sepos not more than a foot from the water, those who were leading climbed on it, and assisted up Marian, Arthur and I following. Here we were all able to rest, sheltered from the rays of the sun, by this time striking down with great force, and concealed from any one at a distance by the thick foliage which surrounded us.

CHAPTER X.

MAKE A RAFT FOR MARIAN—SAMBO'S RETURN—SAVAGES—CAPTURE OF MACO—
HE ESCAPES, AND INTRODUCES HIS BROTHER—KALLOLO'S ACCOUNT OF HIS
NATION AND PEOPLE—A NIGHT ALARM.



WHENEVER my thoughts carry me back to that wonderful swim, it appears to me like a dream, and I begin to doubt its reality ; yet all the incidents are vividly impressed on my mind, and I recollect perfectly the scenery, the actors, and what was said. So I come to the conclusion that it must have been performed.

While we sat on the bough, we got out our provisions from one of the miniature rafts, and took our breakfast. The food restored our strength ; but we required no liquid, for the moisture we had imbibed through our pores in swimming for so long prevented us feeling any sensation of thirst.

Judging from myself, I could not help fearing that Marian must be very tired. I asked her if she did not feel so.

“ Yes, indeed ; though I should like to go on, I am afraid I shall not be able to swim much further,

and shall be the cause of stopping you all. My arms already ache ; but still I will do my best, if it is necessary to swim on. Even should I lose my strength altogether, I can then lie on my back, and Kallolo can tow me."

"We must not let you run the risk of becoming ill," exclaimed Arthur. "We must build a raft large enough to carry you, and we can tow you while you lie upon it. It will be far better than allowing you to swim on."

Marian thanked him, and confessed that she should infinitely prefer that mode of progression, though she enjoyed swimming for a short time. Arthur at once told Uncle Paul and our father, and they agreed that we should build a raft large enough for the purpose proposed. We wished to have it of sufficient size to carry our father also ; but he would not hear of it, declaring that he enjoyed the swimming, and had no fear of his strength failing him.

We at once set to work ; and as we had no axe, we were compelled to break off by main strength, having first deeply notched them with our knives, as many small palms of equal girth as we could collect. We then had to cut up a number into short lengths, to serve as cross-pieces. Having collected our materials, we set to work to bind them together with thin sepos. The raft, though rather rough, was of sufficient strength for our purpose ; and even had it come to

pieces, Marian had life-buoys with which to swim. We placed on it all our small bundles, which we had hitherto either towed or pushed before us ; and again we asked our father if he would not allow us to build a smaller raft for himself.

“No,” he replied. “But I will accompany Marian, and it will afford me rest should I grow tired.”

While we had been employed in forming the raft, Kallolo and Maco had made an excursion into the forest to try and ascertain the whereabouts of the natives we had passed, and whether, from their appearance, they were likely to prove friendly or otherwise. This they could tell, they said, from their style of dress and their hair, from the marks on their bodies, and, above all, from their weapons. If they proved to be a friendly tribe, our friends intended to borrow a canoe, in which we might perform the remainder of our voyage in comparative comfort and safety. If the Indians were likely to be badly-disposed, they would steal away without communicating with them ; and they assured us, from the precautions they would take, that there was no fear of our being discovered.

They had been gone for some time, and the raft was nearly ready, when, as we were looking up the stream, we caught sight of a person swimming down the centre, towards us. We watched him, wondering who he could be. As he drew near, we recognized the woolly head and black face of Sambo. He had not seen us,

nor did he when he was close under the bough. The raft, however, which was floating beneath, seemed to astonish him. He swam up to examine it. A hearty laugh, in which Arthur and I indulged, at the look of astonishment in his countenance, was the first intimation he had of our being close to him.

"Oh, Massa Guy! where have you been all this time?" he exclaimed, as I lent him a hand to get up on the bough.

"Hid away among the branches of this tree," I answered. "And pray, where have you come from?"

"Well, Massa Guy, I wait some time; at last I think that the young lady and you and your father get tired with the long swim, so I thought I might as well bring the raft down the channel as far as I could tow it; but it stuck in the roots of a big tree which stretched nearly across the water, and so, as I could not by myself get it past them, I jumped overboard, and swam along to tell you. If you all come along, some can rest on it, and others can swim alongside, and we then go much faster than we can by swimming."

My father and Uncle Paul thanked Sambo for coming; and had the two Indians returned, would at once have set out with him. He, however, required some rest and food, and was not disposed, he confessed, to start immediately. Uncle Paul, on this, proposed that Marian should commence the voyage without delay, with our father and Arthur as her

attendants. I should have liked to go ; but Arthur was a better swimmer, and was stronger than I was, and would thus be more able to take care of her. Marian, who was ever willing to do what was thought best, now, with Uncle Paul's assistance, took her seat on the raft ; while my father and Arthur, descending from the bough into the water, placed themselves on either side of it, resting one hand on it, while with the other they struck out. Before they had gone far, they found the water far shallower than we had expected, and they were thus able to wade on, and make good progress.

I could not help wishing that I had gone with them, to share the difficulties and dangers they might meet. In a short time they were hidden by the overhanging boughs and mass of creepers, which descended to the surface of the water. I expressed my fears to Sambo.

"Don't trouble yourself about the matter, Massa Guy," he answered. "They will get on very well, and there are plenty of places to rest on ; besides, we shall soon overtake them, and before long get safe on board the raft."

Still I felt anxious, and asked Sambo if he would consent to accompany me, when he had rested sufficiently, should Uncle Paul not object to our starting.

"With all my heart," he answered ; "but I hope before long that Kallolo and Maco will come back, and then we may all set off together."

We waited and waited, however, and still neither of the Indians appeared. Uncle Paul was himself beginning to grow anxious about them, still he felt very unwilling to start until they returned. At length I asked him if he would allow me to go on with Sambo, telling him my anxiety about Marian, my father, and Arthur.

"It is very natural," he observed. "At the same time, I believe that they are as safe as they would be if we were all with them. However, if you still wish to go, I will not object to your doing so; and Tim and I will follow with the two Indians as soon as they return."

Thanking him for the permission he had given me, I got my floats ready, and asked Sambo if he was prepared to start. "Yes," he said, "all ready, Massa Guy;" and raising himself from his nest among the sepos, he lowered his floats into the water, and slipped down after them. Wishing my uncle and Tim good-bye, though, as I observed, it would only be for an hour or two, I followed Sambo's example.

Just then Uncle Paul cried out to me,—*"Stop! stop! I hear the Indians coming, and we will all go together."*

"We will go slowly ahead, then," I answered, "and wait for you."

Directly afterwards I heard Kallolo's voice crying out,—*"Go on!—go on! No time to wait! The savages are coming!"* and looking back, I caught

sight of him through the gloom, springing along over the fallen logs and roots by the side of the channel. The same instant, Uncle Paul and Tim slipped into the water, and placed themselves on their floats, ready to strike out.

"Where is Maco?" asked Uncle Paul.

"He coming, close behind," answered Kallolo, who had thrown himself into the water. As he did so, Quacko, who had been forgotten, leaped off the branch and sprang on to his shoulder; while Ara, though her wings were clipped, managed to reach Tim's head.

Shouting to Maco, who was, we believed, close behind, to follow, we struck out; but we had not gone many fathoms when we saw him, having passed the branch on which we had been seated, trying to make his way along a mass of logs and roots by the side of the channel, though greatly impeded in his progress. He would, we saw, have to take to the water without his floats, though, being a good swimmer, if the distance he had to go was not great that would be of little consequence to him. He was just about to spring into the channel, when a dozen dark-skinned savages, armed with clubs and spears, appeared, some bursting through the brushwood, others dropping down from the boughs above, through which they had apparently made their way. Several of them seized poor Maco before he could spring into the water; and I saw one of them lift a heavy club as if

about to dash out his brains. It would have been hopeless to have attempted his rescue. Urged on by Kallolo, we rushed forward up the bed of the stream, where, fortunately, the water being shallow, we were able to wade at a pretty good rate. The Indians, catching sight of us, sprang into the stream, uttering loud shrieks and yells—in order, we supposed, to intimidate us.

On we went, now wading, now swimming where the water was too deep to allow us to wade, and continuing to make good progress. Looking back, we could still see the dark forms of the savages moving about. It was a question now whether they were about to follow us, as they had approached among the boughs along the channel; and if so, whether they could make more rapid progress than we could by keeping in the stream, and swimming, or wading whenever the depth of water would allow us to do so. Although we had lost sight of them, we were not free from anxiety, as they might possibly at any time again burst out upon us. All we could do, therefore, was to continue going ahead as fast as possible. How thankful we felt that Marian had been sent on before us; for had we been compelled to tow or push the raft, our progress must of necessity have been much slower. We, of course, kept anxiously looking out for her and our father and Arthur, expecting every moment to come upon them; but we had not calcu-

lated sufficiently the time we had remained on the branch after they had left it, and consequently the distance they had probably got ahead.

On and on we swam, or waded. The denseness of the vegetation on either side would have prevented us making our way along the bank, even had there been dry ground. We could only hope that this would effectually put a stop to the progress of our pursuers.

At last, so great and continuous had been our exertions, we all began to feel tired. I should have been more so, had not Tim and Kallolo helped me along. Thankful we felt, I repeat, that Marian and our father had not been compelled to make the violent efforts we were doing. Marian could not possibly have kept up, and we must all have been delayed on her account. We now stopped to listen; and hearing no sounds, agreed that we might venture to rest on the projecting trunk of a tree till our strength had been somewhat restored. Going on a little way further, we found one which would accommodate us all, and from which we could obtain a view both up and down the channel. We climbed on it; and for the first time I felt my limbs trembling all over,—the result of the efforts I had made. Uncle Paul observed me, and taking my hand, said, "I am afraid, Guy, that these exertions will be too much for you."

"Oh no, Uncle Paul; I shall soon be better," I answered. "I am more anxious about Marian and my

father than about myself. If I knew that they were in safety, I could go through the same again without complaining."

"As for them, I have no fear," he observed. "They had so long a start, that by this time they must be close to the raft, if they are not safe on it; and, depend upon it, we shall reach them soon after daylight."

We sat for some time, when Uncle Paul suggested that we should take some refreshment before again starting; for, notwithstanding our hurry, we had kept our provision-raft and clothes attached to our floats; indeed, they were of too much value to admit of our abandoning them, unless in the last extremity. We got out some dried fish and fruit, of which we each of us partook, more from necessity than from feeling any inclination to eat.

We had just again done up the packages, and were preparing to start, when Kallolo exclaimed, "I hear some one coming!" We listened; and in a few seconds we could distinguish the sound of a rustling of boughs, as if a person were making his way through them.

"Stay a moment," said Kallolo. "There are but two people; and if they were foes, they would not approach in that manner.—Who is there?" he asked, in his native tongue.

"Friends," answered a voice.

"It is Maco!" he exclaimed, shouting a welcome

to him ; and in another minute Maco himself, working his way through some brushwood which had concealed him, climbed round the trunk of the tree, and joined us. He was closely followed by another native, whom he introduced to us. "He is more than a friend," he said ; "he is my own brother, who had been taken prisoner by our foes, the Guaranis. They had compelled him to accompany them on their expedition ; but he managed to escape when they retired to hold a war-council after their attack on you. On returning to the spot, he found me unconscious from loss of blood ; but after he had bathed and bound up my wounds, my senses returned, and with his assistance I set out to overtake you. Fortunately, he had discovered a much shorter cut through the forest than that made by the channel of the river, and we were thus able to come up with you, though we scarcely expected it."

We were thankful that Maco had escaped, and glad to get the assistance of his brother Polo. Such, he told us, was his name. He was, for an Indian, a remarkably strong-built, powerful man, and would prove a useful addition to our party.

We had now to wait and afford Maco time to recover his strength. It seemed wonderful that, after the severe treatment he had received, he should have been able to move at all. Fortunately none of his bones had been broken, and the Indians care but little for bruises.

The Guaranis, to which the tribe who attacked us belonged, are the most widely scattered of any of the Indian nations in South America. They are to be found, Uncle Paul told me, as far south as the Rio de la Plata, and on the banks of most of the rivers between it and the Orinoco, where the white man is not yet settled. They exist, however, in greater numbers on the swampy country bordering the banks of the latter river. Their lands being completely inundated by the overflowing of the rivers for some months in each year, they construct their dwellings above the water, among the mauritia palms, whose crowns of fan-like leaves wave above their heads, and shield them from the rays of the burning sun. Not only does this palm afford them shelter, and material for constructing their habitations, but it gives them an abundance of food for the support of life. To the upright trunks of the trees, which they use as posts, they fix horizontally a number of palms, several feet above the highest level of the water. On this framework they lay the split trunks of several smaller palms for flooring. Above it a roof is formed, thatched with the leaves of the same tree. From the upper beams the hammocks are suspended; while, on the flooring, a hearth of clay is formed, on which fires are lighted for cooking their food. They are celebrated for their canoes, which enable them to procure food from the water, and give them the means of moving from

place to place. The tribe with which we had fallen in had, however, left their canoes in some other stream, or we could not possibly have escaped them. They were also, it was evident, of a more warlike and quarrelsome disposition than most of their people, who are noted for their peaceable behaviour. They are, however, in other respects utterly savage in their habits and customs. So little do they care for clothing, that even the females wear only a small piece of the bark of a tree, or the net-like covering of the young leaf of the cocoa-nut or cabbage palm; while their appearance is squalid in the extreme. However, they cultivate cassava and other vegetables on the drier lands bordering the river. From cassava they make an intoxicating liquor, the cause of many savage murders among them. They depend greatly on the pith of the mauritia, as it serves them for bread. No tree, indeed, is more useful to them. Before unfolding its leaves, its blossoms contain a sago-like meal, which is made into a paste and dried in thin slices. The sap is converted into palm wine. The narrow scaled fruit, which resembles reddish pine-cones, yields different articles of food, according to the period at which it is gathered—whether the saccharine particles are fully matured, or whether it is still in a farinaceous condition.

Such was the account Uncle Paul gave me. Why these Guaranis had attacked us, it was hard to say, except that they had observed, when watching our

movements, some persons of an enemy's tribe in our company. Kallolo and Maco belonged, they told us, to the Acawoios, a tribe living towards the head waters of the Essequibo. They are superior in domestic virtues to any other tribe, though warlike, and ready to defend their country as bravely as any people. Their women are virtuous, good housewives, and attentive to their husbands and male relatives, both in sickness and old age ; while the men, in return, pay them more respect than do any other savage people. The young mother is never allowed to work, or to prepare food for her husband, in order that she may attend to her child. They are cleanly, hospitable, and generous, and passionately fond of their children. They seldom talk above a whisper among themselves, or get drunk or quarrel ; nay, more, an angry look is never discernible among them. They use tobacco, but do not chew or smoke it ; simply keeping it between the lips, for appeasing hunger and keeping their teeth clean. Altogether, a more orderly and peaceably-disposed people can scarcely be found anywhere.

Such was the account which Kallolo gave of his nation. Allowances must, of course, be made ; but still, from the specimens we saw, I am inclined to think that it was in the main correct.

Uncle Paul was unwilling to delay any longer, and asked Maco if he was ready to proceed. As Kallolo and Polo agreed to assist him, he replied that he

would do his best to get along, though he still felt very weak. "We will wait a little longer, then," said Uncle Paul; and we resumed our resting-place on the roots of the tree. Of such enormous size were they, that we could all find accommodation without any danger of slipping off. I got into a hollow of the roots, where I could rest with perfect ease with my legs stretched out; and Uncle Paul found a place of similar character close by me. He would, I believe, have given the final order to proceed much sooner, but, overcome with fatigue, he fell, as I did, fast asleep.

I was awakened by hearing Kallolo's voice crying out, "They are coming!—they are coming! We must go on!" Opening my eyes, I saw that it was already daylight. Uncle Paul immediately started up. I was struck by his perfect presence of mind, though an instant before he had been fast asleep. He, as it were, in a moment gathered his wits about him, and inquired from what direction the savages were coming, and how far off they were.

Kallolo pointed to the east. "They cannot be here for three or four minutes, at least," he answered.

"Then, my friends, we will continue our course. We shall soon be at a distance from them. They have shown that they have no inclination to follow us in the water."

As Uncle Paul spoke, I looked around, and found

that Tim and Sambo were not with us. They had gone to a little distance in the wood, to gather some fruit which they had seen hanging temptingly within their reach.

"I have called them, and they are coming back," said Kallolo. "It will not be wise to wait for them."

Uncle Paul agreed with him, and ordered him to lead the way. We lost no time in slipping into the water. Kallolo did as he was directed, and led the way; Uncle Paul followed; I went close astern of him; and the Indians came next. We had not gone far when, looking round, to my satisfaction I saw Tim leaping off the root into the water, with Sambo close to him. They both struck out with all their might, and were soon up to us. Several times I turned my head, fully expecting to see the savages. On we swam, however; and still they did not appear. It then occurred to me that they might be making their way, as they had before done, either among the branches of the trees, or low down, amid the underwood and over the fallen logs; and I could not help feeling that every instant they would appear close to us, and attempt to stop our progress. Had we possessed fire-arms, and the means of preserving them fit for service, we might easily have kept the savages at bay, or have driven them back; but now, notwithstanding all our boasted civilization, we were completely on a level with them, and were utterly unable to defend our-

selves should they choose to attack us. Uncle Paul possibly thought just as I did; but not wishing to increase our fear by showing any himself, he continued to cheer us up.

I felt greatly strengthened by our long rest, and much better able to proceed than I was at first; as, I believe, were the rest of the party. I heard Tim joking with Sambo. "Arrah now, sure, I am altogether turned into a big fish with this long swim, and it will be a hard matter to take to walking again on the dry earth!" he exclaimed. "How do you feel, Sambo?"

"I verry like a fish too, Massa Tim," answered the black. "But still I hope to turn into man again."

I felt much as Sambo said he did, and certainly should have been well content to find myself safe on shore, and in a comfortable abode—a luxury we were not likely to enjoy for many a day to come.

As on the previous day, with the bright sun shining down upon us, I felt my spirits rise, and the dangers I had so dreaded in the dark appeared of a less terrific character. After all, should the savages come up with us, as Maco and his brother had escaped from them, so might we. Perhaps, too, they might not be quite so savage as we had supposed, and might have been prompted by curiosity, rather than from any hostile feelings, to pursue us. Still, of course, it would be prudent to keep out of their way. Uncle

Paul thought so too, and told me to pass the word to those astern, that we must be prepared to swim on till we could come up with Marian and my father and Arthur. On, therefore, we went. It was swim, swim, swim, hour after hour. Of course, had we not had the gourds to support us, it would have been impossible to continue on so long as we did. Resting on them, there was no great difficulty, as we could drive ourselves on with our feet, while we merely guided our course with our arms. Still, even though thus supported, and without any actual danger of sinking, we at length again grew weary; and, in addition, we began to feel the pangs of hunger.

Tim was the first to cry out. "Arrah, Master Guy! couldn't you just speak to Mr. Paul, and tell him we are starving? If it's all the same to him, we will just put ashore on one of the big trunks and stow away a little food in our insides; for though it's something like the life of fishes we are leading, we cannot eat, as they do, in the water."

I told Uncle Paul what Tim said; and we accordingly once more climbed on to a convenient resting-place, where food was served out to all hands.

CHAPTER XI.

WHERE ARE QUACKO AND ARA?—THE SWIM CONTINUED—ESCAPE FROM AN ALLIGATOR—MARIAN AND MY FATHER—REACH A LAKE—A CURIOUS SAIL—FISHING.



WE had been resting for some time, and now felt able to keep on swimming for many miles without stopping. We were in tolerable spirits, having every reason to believe that we should see no more of the savages. We hoped, too, that the next would be our last stage, and that at the end of it we should find Marian, with my father and Arthur, safe on the raft. Uncle Paul then proposed to construct an additional raft to carry the whole party.

We had finished our meal, when Kallolo exclaimed, with an expression of grief on his countenance, "Oh! where is Quacko? Cruel, indeed, have I been to leave him behind; but my thoughts were so engaged with the dangers which threatened us, that for the moment I forgot all about him. I must go back and find the affectionate ape. Even though he may obtain subsistence in the forest, he will

pine and die when he finds himself deserted by his friends."

"Stay, stay, my friend," said Uncle Paul. "Much as I esteem your regard for the poor ape, and his extraordinary attachment to you, I would not have you risk your safety by attempting to recover him. The lives of all the party are of far more importance than that of the ape; and for your own sake as well as ours I must prohibit your going."

Kallolo looked very unhappy on hearing this. "I shall run little or no risk, Señor Paul," he answered; "and, besides, Maco and Polo are as able to guide you as I am. I cannot bear the thought of losing my friend through my own negligence."

Of course, it will be understood that I am merely translating what the Indian said, or rather giving the meaning of his words.

Still, Uncle Paul was firm. "I cannot reconcile it to my conscience to allow you to go; and I should be unable to forgive myself should any accident happen to you," he answered.

I also felt very sorry that Quacko was lost; but the anxiety about our own safety accounted fully for our having forgotten him.

"Sure, now, I have been after forgetting Ara!" exclaimed Tim. "I left the poor bird on a branch fast asleep when those bastards of Indians sent us off into the water in such a hurry, and never a bit did I

think of her till now. I am just as bad as you are, Kallolo ; for, sure, hadn't I charge of the bird, till she flew out of my thoughts altogether ? ”

“ At all events, here she comes back to us again ! ”
I exclaimed.

At that moment Ara was seen approaching with rapid flight ; and in an instant afterwards she perched on Tim's shoulder, and looking into his face, seemed, by the peculiar sounds she made, to be chiding him for his desertion. When he offered her some fruit, she declined to take it ; evidently, however, not from anger, but because she had had an ample breakfast on something more to her taste which she had found on the way.

Only a few minutes had passed, when I saw Maco and Kallolo looking anxiously through the trees to the eastward, and talking together, having caught sight of some object moving through the forest. From the few words I overheard, they were expressing their fears that the savages had again found us out. Suddenly their countenances brightened ; and immediately afterwards we observed Quacko swinging himself amid the pendent vines, and running along the branches, making his way rapidly towards us ! He sprang into Kallolo's arms, and began to chatter eagerly, as if he had had a great deal to communicate. Whether he was telling the native about the savages, or complaining that he had been deserted, and

begging that it might not happen again, I could not ascertain, nor did Kallolo think fit to enlighten us ; but he looked truly delighted at having got back his friend.

Uncle Paul now gave the signal to start. Maco and Sambo led the way, as they had only lately passed down the channel, and were better acquainted with it than Kallolo, who brought up the rear. As before, my sensations were those of a person swimming in a dream. I felt myself floating through the smooth, dark waters, and striking out with my arms and legs, and moving onwards. I saw my uncle ahead ; and the green trees, with their vast stems and intricate tracery of sepos and vines, with numberless parasites hanging from them of every variety of fantastic form, on either side of me ; and the bright blue sky overhead ; and birds of gorgeous plumage, uttering strange notes, flying backwards and forwards. Here and there, tall trunks had fallen prostrate, or were inclining at various angles, and suspended by a net-work of sepos to the boughs of their neighbours,—some actually crossing the stream and forming bridges from side to side. Occasionally, troops of monkeys came gambolling along among the branches, peering down upon us with curious eyes, skipping and frolicking about, and chattering and screeching as if angrily demanding what business we had to intrude on their retreats. Now we passed among cylindrical trunks, rising like columns out of the deep

water. Then there came a splash of fruit falling around us, announcing that birds were feeding overhead ; and looking up, we discovered flocks of parakeets, or bright blue chatterers, or pompadours having delicate white wings and claret-coloured plumage. Again, with a whirl a trogon on the wing would seize some fruit, or a clumsy toucan would make the branches shake as he alighted above our heads. We saw several species of trogons, and frequently caught sight of that curious black umbrella-bird which I have before described. Clumps of the light and exquisitely graceful assai palm shot up everywhere. Here and there the drooping bamboos dipped their feathery branches into the water, frequently covered to their very tops with purple convolvuli ; yellow bignonias carried their golden clusters to the very summit of the more lofty trees ; while white flowering myrtles and orange-coloured mallows bordered the channel. Crabs of every variety of colour and size sat on decaying logs watching for their prey. No sooner, however, did we attempt to seize them than they made off with nimble feet.

I saw all these sights and many more, and yet, as I have said, I gazed on them as in a dream, while with my companions I floated on and on through the silent water. When the sun's rays struck down on the surface of the river, it appeared bright and clear, and our eyes could frequently penetrate to the very

bottom even where it was too deep to allow us to wade ; but in other places, where overhung by the thick foliage, or after the sun had sunk behind the tall trees, it was as black as ink ; and I could not help feeling a sensation of dread lest some ravenous monster was lurking beneath, ready to seize us as we passed by. I refrained from expressing my fears, as they did not appear to be entertained by the rest of the party. Perhaps they too felt as I did, but thought it better to say nothing about the matter, as the journey had to be performed, and there was no other way of accomplishing it.

We began to feel anxious at not having come up with our friends ahead, and were eagerly looking out for them. Sambo assured us that we were not far from the spot where he had left the raft. As he and Tim swam faster than any of us—except Kallolo, who, carrying the monkey, was somewhat impeded in his progress—Uncle Paul directed them to push on ahead to tell our friends that we were coming. Maco and Polo would probably have been employed for the service ; but the former, on account of his wounds, could only just manage to keep up with us ; and the latter was required to remain, that he might render him assistance should it become necessary.

Evening was approaching, and I began to feel that I should be unable much longer to continue this sort of work, and wished more earnestly than ever that I

were once more safe on the raft. I suspect that Uncle Paul felt much as I did, though with that courage which distinguished him he made no complaint, but continued striking out as if it were his usual mode of progression. Not unfrequently thoughts as to what might have been the fate of those I loved more than any others on earth would occur to me, especially when I felt exhausted by my exertions; but I endeavoured to banish them from my mind, and answered Uncle Paul's inquiries with as hearty an "All right" as I could utter.

The day wore on. In some of the bends of the river dark shadows had already begun to fall on the water and to mount up the trunks of the trees. The channel, or *igarape*, as such passages are called in some parts of the country, became narrower than ever. No current was perceptible: the lilies and other beautiful water-plants, little bladderworts, and bright blue flowers with curious leaves and swollen stalks, floated unmoved on the surface, with occasionally large circular leaves and flowers of a gigantic size, which were new to all of us when we first entered this region.

Tim and Sambo had long ago got out of sight, and we hoped that ere this they had reached our friends. As we entered another bend of the channel, I caught sight of some figures in the far distance standing on one of those gigantic trunks I have so often mentioned. My first idea was that they were Indians, perhaps

waiting to cut us off, and I asked Uncle Paul if he could see them.

"Yes, yes ; I am thankful to say I do," he answered. "They are your father and Arthur and dear Marian ; but why they are not on the raft I cannot tell."

The sight encouraged us, and, our strength restored, we struck out with renewed vigour. It was now literally a race among us all who should get there first. Uncle Paul beat me ; and when I was still some distance off, I saw him scrambling up and shaking hands with all the party. Even Maco and Polo passed me, and I saw them make their way up the trunk of a tree which had fallen across the one on which the rest of the party were seated. As they reached the upper part, they eagerly looked up the channel. Anxious as I was to go ahead, I felt as if my arms and legs were so heavily weighted that I could only move them with a sensation I had sometimes experienced in my dreams when trying to overtake a person with whom I desired to communicate, or when pursued by some wild beast from which I was endeavouring to escape.

My father and Marian were standing up ; Arthur was lying on the trunk of the tree ; and Uncle Paul was sitting down with his feet just above the water. Suddenly he started up, and cried out, "Quick, quick, Guy ; strike out for your life !" I did my best, for

I knew he had good reason for bidding me haste. Just as I reached the bank, looking back for an instant, I saw a dark object rise to the surface, and presently a long pair of jaws, with formidable rows of teeth, opened slowly ! I sprang up, knowing at once that it was an alligator, and though one of moderate size, large enough to have given an ugly bite, even if it could not snap off a limb or carry its victim down to the bottom. Uncle Paul stretched out his arms ; and Arthur, who had not till then seen my danger, stooped down to assist me. I had scarcely time to receive my father's and Marian's embraces before I sank almost fainting by the side of Arthur on the trunk of the tree.

I saw, however, that they were still looking anxiously down the channel towards Kallolo, who had been some way behind me with Quacko on his back. They shouted to him, and pointed out the creature, whose wicked eye was turned towards the monkey ; and he would very speedily have crunched him up in his jaws if he had not held tight hold of the Indian. Kallolo, nothing daunted, cast a glance at the amphibious animal, and instead of continuing his course, struck across the stream, drawing, as he did so, his long knife from his belt, ready to defend himself and his favourite should he be attacked. The shouts of my friends frightened the creature ; which, instead of darting at Kallolo, as they expected it would, dived

beneath the surface, probably to seek for shelter under the bank or to escape to a distance. Kallolo quickly gained a fallen stem, and made his way up to us.

"What has become of Tim and Sambo?" I asked faintly; for though too weak to stand, I had not lost consciousness.

"They have gone on ahead to the raft, which is only a little distance off," answered Arthur; "and we are now looking out for their return. So fatigued were your father and I, that, when we reached this convenient resting-place, we determined to remain here till your arrival. We have, indeed, cause to be thankful that we did not attempt to go further, now that we have seen the creatures which inhabit this part of the channel. Had we known it before, the fact would have tended to unnerve us."

"I am indeed thankful that I did not know it," said Marian; "for I should have been miserable with the thought that at any moment my father or Arthur might have been attacked by one of the monsters."

Kallolo took the matter very coolly. "If the cayman had come near me, he would have had to repent of his boldness," he observed. "My knife was ready for him, and I should have stuck it into his throat before he could have touched me. I should not fear to encounter a much larger one, provided I knew that he was approaching. These creatures are dangerous only when people are unprepared to meet them."

“But as I had no knife ready, and should not have known where or how to strike him, I am very thankful that I got out of the water in time to avoid his sharp teeth,” I observed.

Marian shuddered. “Yes, indeed, it was dreadful even for the few moments in which I thought there was danger,” she observed. “Oh, I am so thankful that when my father and Arthur were swimming by the side of my raft; they were not attacked by the monster.”

“We indeed ran a great risk,” observed my father. “Probably the creature was frightened by the splashing we made in the water, and by the appearance of the raft; or possibly it may not have been in the neighbourhood at the time.”

“I suspect that it was not far off,” observed Uncle Paul. “These creatures do not move much about; they frequent particular pools and parts of the river. However, its appearance must make us cautious how we venture into the water in future. We may be well satisfied that our long swim is over.—Do you see anything of Sambo and Tim with the raft?” he shouted to the Indians, who were still looking out.

“Yes, yes; they have this moment come in sight, and are standing on the raft poling it along,—so it seems to me,” answered Maco, pointing along the igarape, down which a stream of light came from the setting sun, tinging here and there the boughs on

either side, and gilding the summits of the lofty trees. No scene of the same character could have surpassed it in beauty.

"It is indeed lovely," exclaimed Marian. "Till we came here, perhaps the eyes of those capable of appreciating its beauties have never gazed on it. It seems strange that so many lovely spots, such as exist in these wilds, should be concealed from the eyes of civilized people."

"Many things exist for which we cannot account," observed Uncle Paul. "Birds of the most gorgeous plumage are found in parts of the globe inhabited only by the lowest savages. Nothing can surpass the magnificence of the icebergs clustered at the arctic and the antarctic poles, where the feet of human beings never tread. What curious coloured fish swim far down beneath the surface, where the eye of man cannot penetrate! Indeed, we may believe that civilized men are not the only beings capable of enjoying the beauties of creation; which all, however, tend, when brought to light, to exhibit the power and beneficence of the Creator."

Arthur listened attentively to what Uncle Paul was saying. "Yes, indeed, I agree with you," he observed. "There are numberless things which we see around us in nature, but cannot comprehend the reason of their existence, though we must acknowledge the wisdom of Him who made them all, and bow humbly to his will."

Our attention was now turned towards the approaching raft. While it was coming, Uncle Paul inquired what provisions we had among us ; and we found, on examination, that the stock was very limited, and that the fruit had come to an end. While there was still light, therefore, he sent the Indians to search for some more. We saw, not far off, several palms and other fruit-bearing trees with birds perched on them, showing that the fruit was ripe. Both Arthur and I were desirous to accompany them, but we felt much too weary to move.

"You must take care not to get into the midst of the macaws' nests, else you may find yourselves attacked as we were," observed Arthur. "I see a number of those birds congregated about a tree in the distance, and possibly they have their homes thereabout ; at all events, they may not like to be disturbed in their feast, and will do battle with the intruders."

"Never fear," answered Uncle Paul ; "the Indians know pretty well what they are about."

We had not long to wait for Sambo and Tim, who managed to bring the raft close up to us. It was, however, so late in the day that Uncle Paul considered it best for us to remain where we were till the following morning, when he proposed that we should build another raft capable of carrying all the party who could not find room on the first. As we had no tools excepting our knives, the operation of

cutting down the trees would not be an easy one ; therefore Tim offered to commence at once, so that we might have some progress made before morning. Uncle Paul thanked him for his forethought. Sambo, aided by Kallolo, immediately set to work to break off by main force as many young palm-trees as they could meet with. Neither Arthur nor I felt that we had strength to assist them. Indeed, we could do nothing but lie stretched on the trunk of the tree ; and had the Indians come in pursuit of us, I really believe that we should have been unable to make any efforts to escape. My father, also, was greatly exhausted ; but Uncle Paul, though fatigued, was still able to exert himself, and to give any directions which were necessary.

At length the two Indians returned with an ample supply of fruit. We enjoyed our supper. It was the first we had taken together for several days. When it was over it was high time to secure sleeping-places before the shades of night should come down upon us. By arranging some sepos which hung down from the boughs above, we formed a secure place for Marian ; and then we looked out for similar places for ourselves, where we might rest without the danger of falling off into the water : and I could not help reflecting that if we should meet with such an accident, the creature we had seen would take the opportunity of biting off a foot or an arm, or of dragging us off to his den to

devour us at his leisure. I had read of people sleeping over volcanoes : our fate would have been quite as unpleasant, had we fallen into the water, as that of persons found napping at the moment a volcano commenced sending forth its streams of lava or showers of ashes.

Though we believed that we were already at a safe distance from the savages, Uncle Paul considered it prudent to set a watch, that we might have due notice of the approach of danger. Arthur and I begged that we might take our share of duty, with one of the men to assist us. Uncle Paul himself intended to keep the first watch, to give me time to obtain some rest. I did not sleep very soundly. Frequently I opened my eyes and saw the tall figure of Uncle Paul pacing up and down on the trunk of the tree, with a pole in his hand to balance himself, making only three or four paces between each turn, stopping every now and then to look up and down the channel, or to peer into the forest. While he was on the watch, I was sure that we should have timely warning of danger. At length his figure seemed to extend into gigantic proportions, and then grew more and more indistinct, till my eyes closed.

Arthur at last awoke me. He had had his watch, and it was now time for me to take mine ; but he warned me to be careful not to slip off the trunk, as he had nearly done, he said. I got up and took the pole he gave me. At one end was a sharp point,

which would serve to give an effectual thrust to any wild beast, or to a human savage who might attack us. There was not much probability of our being assailed either by a jaguar or a puma, as these creatures were not likely to make their way across the water intervening between us and the dry land ; but we were not safe from the stealthy approach of an anaconda, though we had seen no signs of such a creature since we had left the broad river. I could not, however, get out of my head the recollection of the monster which had attacked us ; and very often, as I looked up and down the channel, I fancied that I saw one of the creatures swimming towards us, with its head above the surface. Greatly to my relief, on each occasion the object I had caught sight of resolved itself into the partly submerged root or branch of a tree.

Very thankful I felt when at last the streaks of early dawn appeared in the eastern sky, and the noises of animated nature again burst on my ear. Parrots and macaws, and numberless other birds, began to utter their varied notes, and the sounds I have before described echoed through the forest. I called up my companions, and, without a moment's delay, all hands set to work to put together the raft for which we had collected part of the materials the previous evening. More were required ; and while the Indians and Tim went into the forest to cut or break down the palms, Uncle Paul, assisted by Sambo, bound them together.

Arthur and I employed ourselves in dragging the logs up to them, and in cutting the lianas or sepos, which my father and Marian unwound and prepared for use as cordage. The task was a far more difficult one than it would have been had we possessed axes. Our knives served only to cut off the smaller boughs, and slightly to trim the logs or cut the lianas.

We worked away with so much energy, that by eight o'clock, as far as we could judge from the sun, we had put a raft together capable of carrying six persons. Pretty well tired by our exertions, and with good appetites, we sat down on the huge trunk to breakfast. The heat of the sun was already great; but, shaded by the overhanging branches, the spot we occupied felt delightfully cool, while the bunches of fruit the Indians had procured were most refreshing. At this meal we finished the last of the dried fish and meat we had brought with us, and we had henceforward to depend on the birds or animals we might trap or shoot in the forest, or the fish we might obtain from the water. We had, however, no fear of starving. Kallolo assured us that we should find turtle in abundance; and that, with the blow-pipe he had undertaken to form, he should be able to kill as many birds and monkeys as we might require; while the produce of many varieties of palm-trees and the different fruits we were sure to discover would afford us an abundant supply of vegetable diet.

Our final task was to cut some long poles, and to split up into thin boards, by means of wedges, a portion of a branch which had been torn off by a storm. These boards were secured to the ends of short poles, and thus formed as many rough paddles as we could use.

All was now ready, and Uncle Paul gave the order to prepare for departure. The smaller raft was first drawn under the bough: Marian was placed on it as a passenger, Uncle Paul went as captain, Sambo as pilot, and Arthur and I as the crew. Our father consented to go on the newly-constructed raft, which was navigated by the three Indians and Tim. On board neither of them was there much room to spare; and considerable caution was necessary, when standing up, to avoid falling off into the water or upsetting it.

All of us having taken our places, Uncle Paul exclaimed, "Now, my friends, we must commence our voyage; and I pray that we may be protected from all the dangers we may have to encounter."

The channel, however, was narrow, and we had considerable difficulty in making our way along it. Our raft, being the smallest, glided very easily between the overhanging branches and roots; but the people of the other, with the exception of my father, had several times to jump overboard to work it through the narrow places. Our progress was thus but slow. The scenery was very similar to that which we had already passed; indeed, sometimes I

scarcely knew whereabouts we were, so much did one part resemble another.

We had been going on for some time under thick, overhanging boughs, when suddenly the bright shining waters of a lake opened out before us; and, greatly to our satisfaction, shortly afterwards we found ourselves free of the narrow igarape, or channel, through which we had been so long passing. The bright sunlight and the free air of the lake raised our spirits, and made us feel as if all our difficulties were over. Happily we did not then think of the many we had still to encounter. A slight breeze was blowing from the northward, and I suggested that we should try to rig a sail, with one of the poles as a mast and another as a yard. We had but scanty materials for forming it; but we all contributed our handkerchiefs, and Sambo offered his shirt! With some of the line we had prepared for fishing we stitched the whole together, and then secured it to the yard. A strong breeze would quickly have blown our sail into its original constituents of shirt and handkerchiefs; but the gentle air which favoured us served to send on the raft as fast as we could paddle it. The people on the other raft followed our example, and we saw two shirts stretched out, with a large handkerchief to form a top-sail. Under this strange sail we glided smoothly over the calm surface of the lake.

We had carefully preserved our fishing lines and

hooks, and Uncle Paul now distributed them between the two rafts. We got out ours as we went along, the rate at which we were moving not preventing us from having hopes that we might catch some fish. We were not disappointed. Before long I got a bite. The fish pulled lustily, but as the tackle was strong, it could not break away; and after it had been pretty well drowned by being towed, Sambo assisted me to haul it in. When we had got the fish up to the raft, the black stooped down, and, at no little risk of toppling off into the water, lifted it on board. It must have weighed at least several pounds, and it resembled in shape the black fish of our northern regions. Kallolo afterwards told me that this fish is called the *tambaki*, and is one of the best in this part of the world. The only pity was that we could not cook it till we reached dry land. As, however, we hoped to do so before long, we again threw out our lines. In a few minutes we caught another fish of the same species, not quite so large. The Indians on the other raft had, in the meantime, caught three fish of similar size, but of a different species; and not being so particular as we were, they cut one of them up, and, after having hung the pieces in the sun for a short time, ate it for dinner. We, however, contented ourselves with the fruits and nuts which had been collected in the morning. After having rested for some time, we again took to our paddles, and, the breeze remaining

fair, the rafts made good progress. We earnestly hoped that the wind would continue in the same quarter, as we might thus before nightfall reach the spot where Captain van Dunk and Peter had been left.

We now entered the igarape Sambo had described. As it was tolerably broad, and the wind still favoured us, we quickly got through it, and entered another lake somewhat similar to the one we had left. With much satisfaction we heard Sambo announce that in another half hour we should reach the end of our voyage. We paddled on even more eagerly than before, hoping soon to be shaking the honest skipper and his mate by the hand, and thinking how pleasant it would be to sleep comfortably in a hut, and to sup well-cooked provisions.

CHAPTER XII.

A JOYFUL MEETING—THE NEW SETTLEMENT—A MIRACULOUS ESCAPE—KALLOLO
MAKES A BLOW-PIPE AND WOORALI POISON—PROGRESS OF OUR VESSEL—
MEET WITH A JAGUAR—EFFECT OF TIM'S POLITENESS.



As we sailed along about a hundred yards off the mighty trees whose branches overhung the lake, we looked out eagerly for the settlement our two friends had, we hoped, formed on the shore. Water-lilies with enormous leaves floated on the surface, showing that the depth could not be great. On the lower branches of the trees, and here and there where points of land ran out into the lake, were numerous magnificent birds. Among them, the scarlet ibis and roseate spoon-bill excelled all others in gorgeousness of colouring. The ibises were of the brightest scarlet, except that the tips of their wings were black; the spoonbills were equally beautiful, their general colour being a delicate rose-tint, with a rich lustrous carmine on their shoulders and breast-tufts; the formation of their bills was also very singular. We saw them fishing for shrimps and other small creatures along the edges of

the water. The wood ibis is larger than either of the other two ; its general plumage is white, the tips of the wings and the tail being of a purplish-black. I cannot, however, attempt to describe the various birds of which we caught sight as we glided along. We were satisfied, however, that the forest and the water would supply us with an abundance of food.

“ We shall have, however, no little difficulty in replacing our clothing,” I observed ; “ though, as fortunately Marian’s box has been saved, she will be better off than any of us.”

“ I don’t despair of being able to manufacture clothing sufficient for our wants,” said Uncle Paul,—“ shoes, hats, and cloaks ; but we must take to kilts when our trousers give way. We shall have, to be sure, somewhat the appearance of savages ; but I hope that our manners will not become less civilized in consequence.”

“ I can easily fancy how we can make dresses of leaves, or even of matting,” said Arthur ; “ but how do you propose to manufacture shoes, unless we capture some wild beasts and tan their skins ?”

“ I propose to make shoes of a vegetable substance,” answered Uncle Paul. “ I have already seen some trees which produce it, and I have no doubt that we shall find others near our settlement. Every sailor knows how to make hats from grass or leaves ; and the rest of our dresses must be made, as you suppose,

of matting. Depend on it we shall have plenty of occupation when once we get on shore, in order to supply our necessities ; and we may be thankful for it, as it will prevent us from dwelling unduly on our past misfortunes, or on the dangers and difficulties we may have yet to encounter."

"I wish we were on shore, then," I exclaimed ; "for I cannot help thinking of the past, and on the dangers which may yet be in store for us."

"Rouse up, Guy," exclaimed Uncle Paul. "Your wish will soon be realized ; for see yonder hut on the shore, and the captain and Peter standing ready to welcome us."

We urged on our raft, and our friends beckoned to us to come to a part of the bank where we could most easily land. We made for it, and soon reached the shore. The captain and his mate Peter were standing ready to secure the raft.

"Welcome, friends, welcome to our new province of *terra firma*," exclaimed the former in a hearty tone, as he grasped Uncle Paul's hand. Then stooping down, he lifted Marian in his arms and placed her safely on the beach, exclaiming—"And you, my pretty maid, I am rejoiced to see you safe after all the perils you have gone through."

"Indeed I am very thankful to have arrived here," answered Marian ; "for I feared that we should never see you again." She had not before this said a word

about the alarm she must have constantly felt during our passage up the igarape.

"You don't look so much fatigued as I should have expected," observed the captain; "and a few days on shore, with the good cheer we can offer you, will set you all to rights."

He then shook hands with Arthur and me, and giving a friendly nod to Sambo, turned round to welcome my father, the larger raft having closely followed us to the beach. All the party having landed, the two rafts were secured to the trunks of some trees growing at the water's edge. The worthy skipper now conducted us to two huts which he and Peter had erected. He exhibited them with no little satisfaction. One was small, but neatly built; the other was of considerable dimensions, and capable of containing several persons, somewhat thickly stowed.

"I thought of the little maid, and my first care was to build a house which she might have entirely to herself. In it she may rest as long in the morning as she likes without being disturbed by us when we go to our work," he observed.

Marian thanked him warmly as he led her towards the little hut, in which he had formed a bed-place, and put up a table and a three-legged stool; which, though roughly made, showed his desire to attend to her comfort. The bed-place was covered thickly with dry grass. Poor Marian expressed her pleasure at

the thought of being able to rest in quiet on it. The larger hut was destitute of furniture.

"We must be content, my friends, to sleep and take our meals on the ground till we can make some hammocks and form a table and benches," said the captain. "Peter and I could do no more; we have worked hard to accomplish this much, I can assure you."

"That you have indeed, Captain van Dunk," observed Uncle Paul. "We are grateful to you for having laboured so hard for our benefit."

"Peter and I knew that you would require a secure resting-place, where you might sleep in peace without the fear of being pounced upon by a jaguar or a puma," answered the skipper. "It will afford accommodation to you four gentlemen and Peter and me, and the other men will soon run up a hut for themselves. They must not spend much time on it, for all hands will have enough to do in building the vessel and procuring food. We can obtain an ample supply, but we must not sit down and expect it to drop into our mouths."

"You will find every one ready to assist you in carrying out your plans, captain, for a more obedient set of men I have never met with," said Uncle Paul.

"Yes, yes, I am sure of that," said the captain. "Now, instead of losing more time in talking, let us go to supper. We have some parrots and macaws roasting, and a collection of ripe fruit for the little maid."

“And we have brought some fine fish,” I said, “to add to the feast.”

“Then we will put them on the spit at once,” observed the captain; on which I ran down to the raft and returned with a big fish in each hand. Peter, who acted as cook, with Sambo’s assistance soon had the fish cleaned and spitted, when the latter took his seat by the fire to keep the various roasts turning.

Marian only partook of a little of the fish, and some cassava bread which the captain had prepared and baked for her beforehand. He then begged her to retire to her hut, and to take that rest she so much needed. Her trunk, which had come on in the raft, enabled her to obtain a change of clothing,—a luxury none of the rest of us could enjoy.

We all enjoyed the feast, however; for we were thoroughly tired, and expected to obtain a comfortable night’s rest after it. As soon as it was over, we thankfully entered our hut, where we found that the captain and Peter had thoughtfully collected a large supply of dry grass and leaves for our use. I can truly say that I have never since slept more soundly on feather-bed than I did during that first night in our new settlement, as the skipper called it. I dreamed not of Indians, nor of anacondas, nor of our long swim. Daylight was streaming in at the open door when I awoke. I found the rest of the party, with the exception of my father, on foot, and the captain giving directions

to each one what to do. My father was going to get up.

"No, no, my friend," said the skipper. "You are weary, and require a long rest; we must excuse you from working until you have sufficiently recovered to undertake it."

"But *I* am ready to work," I said, springing to my feet. "Tell me what to do and I will willingly perform it. If I had an axe I would quickly begin to cut down a tree."

"Our first business will be to form tools to work with," answered the captain. "We must search for big stones of a proper shape to serve as hammers; although they are not common down here, they may be found in the interior. We must then form wedges to split the trees, which Peter, who is our best axe-man, will cut down. You will then find ample employment in forming tree-nails with your knife. We must be content to proceed by slow degrees, and each man must take the task for which he is best fitted."

I saw the wisdom of Captain van Dunk's remarks, and felt more confident of success than I should have done had he undertaken to perform in a hurry the work he proposed. I begged that I might set out at once.

"I shall send out three parties for that object," he said. "You with one of the Indians, your cousin with another, and Tim with the third."

Having made a hurried meal of some of the provisions which remained from our supper of the previous night, we set out. Polo was my companion, Arthur took Maco, and Tim was accompanied by Kallolo. The Indians carried their bows and arrows, and we were each armed with long poles, which, being pointed at one end, would serve as spears as well as assist us in our progress. We had no fear of meeting with human foes, as the captain and Peter told us that they had seen no traces of inhabitants. After proceeding some way together we separated, Arthur and his attendant going towards some high ground which appeared beyond the forest-region in front of us, while I made my way up to reach a range of hills in front, Tim and Kallolo going in an opposite direction.

After proceeding some distance we found ourselves on the border of a rapid and shallow stream, and I hoped that we should discover in its bed some stones of the shape and size we required. We made our way along it, and in a short time came upon one which seemed just adapted for the purpose in view. This encouraged me to search for more. I was not disappointed in my hopes, and before long found three others; one with a hole through the centre, the rest being somewhat long, with flat ends, and a narrow part conveniently shaped for attaching a handle. I gave two to Polo, and carried two myself. Feeling sure that the captain would be well pleased with our

success, we commenced our return journey. Supposing that the stream would lead us in the proper direction, we followed down its banks. We continued till we found ourselves in a thick part of the forest, but the underwood was not sufficiently dense altogether to stop our progress. Sometimes we were at a little distance from the stream, and then again we made our way close along the edge. The water was clear and bright, and the sun shone directly down upon the channel, which had now assumed the character of an igarape, the trees by it adorned with numberless creepers and parasitical plants, covered with gaily-coloured flowers, which hung in fantastic wreaths from the boughs. I felt that a swim would be very enjoyable. Being somewhat warm, however, I rested on an overhanging bough before taking off my trousers to plunge in, while Polo stood near me.

"Well, I think I am cool enough now," I observed to him, and was about to stand up before taking a plunge into the tempting water, when I saw the surface disturbed, and presently the huge head and formidable jaws of an enormous alligator rose above it, his wicked eyes turned towards me as if he longed to have me in his maw! I shuddered as I gazed at him, for in another minute I might have been within that fearful mouth, and carried down beneath the surface, as has been the fate of many people in this part of the country. I was thankful that I had seen the

creature, for his appearance was a warning to us all not to venture into the water. Polo, stooping down, assisted me to get off the branch, for fear I should by any chance slip, and become, after all, a victim to the monster. I had never before seen so hideous a creature. Though we shouted, he seemed in no way intimidated, and still floated on the surface, as if meditating an attack. Polo earnestly advised that we should retire from the bank, as he said that he had known instances when alligators, hard pressed by hunger, had rushed on shore, and seizing persons, had carried them off without a possibility of being rescued by their friends. I shuddered again as I listened to his account, and thought of the fearful risk I had run. We sat watching the monster for some time at a safe distance, with our spears in our hands; but he showed no inclination to follow us, and at length, turning round, he went swimming down the stream till he was lost to sight.

We had some difficulty in making our way back through the forest, for the stream, we found, took a turn away from the settlement, and it led us further from it than we had supposed. The captain highly approved of the stones we had brought. Arthur and Tim had already arrived, each of them having found only one stone adapted to the purpose of hammers; but they were large and heavy, and were just what was wanted. They had, however, brought several

large pieces of hard stone of flinty nature and wedge or axe-like form, which the captain pronounced to be of the greatest value.

"I thought so when I discovered them," observed Arthur. "It seemed to me that by chipping or grinding them, sharp edges might be formed so as to serve either for wedges or perhaps even for axes."

"They will form axes, though some labour will be required to sharpen them," exclaimed the captain. "We could then easily fix them in handles; and they will be of the greatest use, if not for cutting down the trees, at all events for scoring the trunks for the wedges, and for smoothing the planks when split. You must search for some more of the same character; and if you find them, as I have no doubt you will, we shall all have tools, and be able to make rapid progress."

The three Indians at once undertook not only to put handles to the hammers, but to sharpen the stones intended for axe-heads.

"It will take some time," observed Kallolo; "but in our country we do not think much of time, and patience overcomes all difficulties."

"We must not, however, forget the necessity of finding provisions for our settlement," observed Uncle Paul. "Kallolo has undertaken to supply us, if he can find time to form a blow-pipe; it will be wise, I think, to allow him to do so before he attempts to execute any other work."

The captain agreed to this, and begged that Kallolo would endeavour to find the materials for the instrument he proposed to make.

The Indian's eye brightened. "Yes, yes, I will start to-morrow morning," he said. "I will search also for the ingredients for the poison, without which the blow-pipe would be of little use. In the meantime I will labour at the hammers and axes, which Maco and Polo may complete while I am employed at the zabatana."

Marian, on seeing all the rest of the party busy, begged that she also might have something to do. "I will gladly act as cook for you, though, unfortunately, I am very little acquainted with the art; but with some hints from Sambo, I may in time become proficient."

"I think we may find pleasanter employment than that for you, my little maid," said the captain. "Some of us are in want of hats, and we shall require a large amount of matting to serve as bedding and clothing, and also to form sails for our vessel. I have thought that if you and your father, assisted by your brother Guy, would turn your attention to the matter, you would render great service to our little community."

Marian said she should be delighted; and my father and I at once expressed our readiness to become plaiters and weavers, and to give our thoughts to the subject;—though, of course, we could not expect to ac-

comply much at first, as we had very little knowledge of the art we proposed to exercise. Kallolo, however, said that he would show us how matting was manufactured in his country. It could be made sufficiently fine for clothing, or thick and coarse for roofs of cabins on board river-boats, or very strong for sails.

Some feathery-leaved reeds grew on the shore of the lake not far off, and as we were eager to begin, Arthur and I cut a few, and bringing them back to Kallolo, begged him to show us how to plait. He at once undertook to do so, observing, however, that the reeds were not fit for any other purpose than to make coarse hats; and that they must be first dried, and then split, before they could be fit for use. "However, they will do to learn with, and you can at once make hats with your platting," he added. Being anxious to learn, we kept hard at work, and before Marian repaired to her hut for the night we had made several yards of platting, and my father had designed a plan for manufacturing matting.

I cannot attempt to describe the labour of each day, or the progress we made in our work. Kallolo, who had started as he intended at daybreak, returned in the evening with the materials for his blow-pipe, and the ingredients for manufacturing the woorali poison. He had brought several stems of small palms, from which he selected two of different sizes. Outside they

appeared rough from the scars of the fallen leaves ; but he said that the soft pith within them would soon rot if steeped in water, and being easily extracted would leave a smooth polished bore. The smaller one was very delicate, being scarcely thicker than a finger ; the other was an inch and a half in diameter. He explained that the smaller one was to be pushed inside the larger ;—this was to be done that any curve in the one might counteract that in the other. Having allowed his stems to remain in water two or three days, he was able to remove the pith, which had thus become rotten. He then fastened a cup-shaped wooden mouth-piece to one end, and bound the whole spirally with the long flat strips of the black bark of the climbing palm-tree. Among other materials, he had brought a quantity of wax of a dark hue, with which he smeared the whole of the outside. The tube he had thus formed tapered towards the muzzle, the mouth-piece being fitted to the upper end. Both ends were tightly bound round with a cord of silk grass ; the butt being further secured by a nut cut horizontally through the middle, with a hole in the end forming a ring, which, should it strike the ground, would prevent it from splitting. About two feet from the mouth-end he fastened a couple of the teeth of the agouti to serve as sights.

Kallolo having finished his blow-pipe hung it up carefully by one end, as should it become in the slight-

est degree bent, it would be, he explained, completely spoiled. He then commenced manufacturing arrows. They were made out of the leaf of a species of palm-tree, hard, brittle, and pointed as sharp as needles. Having burned the butt end, he fastened round it some wild cotton of just sufficient thickness to fit the hole of the tube. As soon as he had formed an arrow he put it into the blow-pipe, and aimed at an unfortunate parrot perched on a tree fifty yards off. The parrot uttering a cry flew away, and the arrow fell to the ground; but as no poison had as yet been used, the bird was little the worse for its wound. The case would have been very different had the arrow been dipped in the poison: the bird would have died in thirty or forty seconds, Kallolo told me. He was well satisfied with his performance, and pronounced his blow-pipe a certain killer.

He had now to manufacture the poison. He had already procured all the ingredients, and three large bowls; but he confessed to the captain that all his efforts would be in vain unless he could obtain a vessel in which to boil it, as the wooden bowls would certainly not answer the purpose. His object was to obtain the loan of the saucepan!

"Why, we shall all be poisoned if you use it," said the captain, starting back with dismay; "you had better go without your blow-pipe than allow that to happen."

Kallolo assured him that the vessel would not in any

way be injured ; and that should the white people even swallow a small portion of the poison, they would not suffer.

“ Ah, my friend, but I would rather not risk it,” observed the captain. “ However, if you can undertake to clean the pot thoroughly after you have used it, I will not hinder you, as I am well aware that you could procure more food with your blow-pipe than all of us together, with our bows and arrows and fishing-lines.”

Having obtained the loan of the pot, Kallolo immediately commenced operations. He had, I should have said, formed a small hut at a little distance from the camp, in which to concoct the mixture. He had placed there the various ingredients he had collected. The first was composed of several bunches of the woorali vine; another was a root with a sharp, bitter taste. Besides these there were two bulbous plants, which contained a green and glutinous juice. He had also collected two species of ants : one large and black, with a sharp, venomous sting ; the other a little red ant, which stings like the nettle. Having scraped the woorali vine and bitter root into thin shavings, he put them into a sieve made of leaves, which he held over a bowl, and poured water on them : a thick liquor came through, having the appearance of coffee. He then produced the bulbous plants, and squeezed a portion of the juice into the pot, adding the dried ants, as well as

the pounded fangs of two venomous snakes. Clearing everything away, he made a fire in the centre of the hut, and pouring the mixture into the saucepan, he boiled it slowly for some hours. The scum was then taken off, when the liquid had become reduced to thick sirup of a deep brown colour. He now told me that it was fit for use; and his darts being ready, he dipped them into it, as he did also several large arrows, and the points of some of our spears. The remainder he poured off into some small gourds, which he covered carefully over with leaves, and hung up in the hut.

"Now!" he said, "we are prepared for any enemies who may come near us; and we may be sure that we shall be able to procure as much game as we can desire."

The last thing to be done was to cleanse the saucepan. He first boiled water in it several times, throwing each quantity away; he then scraped it with his knife all over, and rubbed it again and again with leaves, till, pronouncing it to be perfectly free from the slightest particle of poison, he took it to the skipper, who examined it with a suspicious eye. I told him all that I had seen done, and at last he seemed satisfied that no one would be the worse for food cooked in it.

By this time a number of hammers had been formed, and no less than four axes. Maco and Polo, working under water, had sharpened them by means of some other hard stone which they found in the stream. For this

purpose each of them dug a hole on the shore of the lake, into which they let the water, and seated over it performed the whole operation under the surface. I reminded them of the huge alligator I had seen.

"No fear, Massa Guy," answered Maco; "while we make noise like this, the caymans take care not to come near us."

"I hope that you will not be mistaken," I answered, advising them to place a number of small poles in the mud in front of them, which might prevent even a hungry cayman from landing, as he would probably be suspicious.

A most important event now took place. It was laying the keel of our proposed vessel, which had been prepared with infinite labour, chiefly by a single axe. When we considered that we had to cut out the ribs with such tools, and then to shape and nail on the planks, we might well have despaired of accomplishing the work.

"Have we not an auger, and a saw, and an axe? why then should we despair?" exclaimed the skipper over and over again. "Though we have no nails, we can make wooden ones; and though we have no iron, we will compel wood and fibre to take its place. We shall build a vessel, never fear."

Having no paper for the plan, the captain had smoothed a piece of ground, on which he had drawn it out with great accuracy, so that the opposite timbers

should be of the same shape, and agree with each other, expanding less and less towards the bow and stern, that when the planks were laid on they should remain even and be firmly fixed. Uncle Paul approved of Captain van Dunk's plan, and ably seconded him in every part of the work.

All day long hewing and chipping went on. Each crooked piece of timber, as it was cut off, was brought to the plan to ascertain for which of the ribs it was most fitted. Tim proved himself one of the best workmen of the party. I suspect that had all possessed regular tools others might have excelled him, but his talent consisted in employing our very imperfect instruments, and in devising new methods of getting through the work. He was especially an adept at splitting trees. No sooner was one felled than he would set to work to scrape off the bark at the upper part, and to run deep and straight lines down it; he then fixed the wedges in a long row, and went from one to another, driving them in as if playing on a musical instrument. When they were all firmly fixed, he would call the rest of the party with their hammers, and at a signal make them all strike at once, seldom failing to separate an even plank.

We had not hitherto been troubled by wild beasts, nor had even any serpents shown their ugly heads. I had one morning accompanied Tim into the forest, intending to look out for trees to fell, Tim carrying

his axe to mark them. I had thoughtlessly left my bow and arrows behind, and had only a long pointed stick in my hand. We had reached a somewhat open space, and having passed across it, had arrived at a narrow glade,—probably the result of a hurricane. Just at the edge of it Tim had discovered one of the trees of which he was in search. We were going up to it when, not twenty yards off, a huge jaguar stalked out of the forest, and stood looking at us, apparently meditating a spring in our direction!

“Do not run, as you value your life, Mr. Guy,” exclaimed Tim. “Stand still, and I will tackle the gentleman.”

I did as he advised, merely holding my pointed stick before me; though I knew that had the jaguar attacked us it would have been of little more use than a toothpick. Tim, however, ran boldly forward, and, to my surprise, doffing his hat, exclaimed,—

“The top of the morning to ye, Mr. Jaguar. You will please to say what you want, or take yourself out of this; for it’s your room rather than your company we would be after wishing for.”

The jaguar, astonished at the coolness of the man, though he could not understand what was said, turned slowly round and went off, trailing his tail after him as if he felt himself conquered. On seeing this, Tim set up a wild shout, which sounded to my ears like “Wallop-ahoo-aboo—Erin-go-brah!” in which I very

heartily joined him, feeling no small satisfaction at the peaceable termination of this our first interview with one of the very few wild beasts we had to dread in the forests of the Orinoco.

The puma, or American lion, though not in reality quite so formidable as a jaguar, is not a creature which an unarmed man would wish to meet when alone ; though, except when very hard pressed by hunger, or when it can attack a person unprepared, it seldom destroys human beings. The savage jaguar, on the contrary, will follow with stealthy feet the trail of the Indian, and suddenly seizing him, deprive him of life. Though generally not much larger than a wolf, it occasionally reaches the size of the Indian tiger, and is often called the tiger or panther of the New World. It greatly resembles the leopard, especially in its forest habits, as by means of its powerful claws it can with ease spring up the trunk of a tree, and make its way along a branch, ready to pounce down upon a foe. It is truly the lord of the South American forests, as it often attacks the thick-skinned tapir, and even the largest alligator. In spite of the enormous jaws of the latter, the jaguar will leap towards the tail of the creature, tear open its side, and devour it even before life is extinct. Only two animals do not fear the jaguar ;—one is the great ant-eater, which is defended from the monster's attacks by its thick shaggy coat ; the other is the little peccary. The latter, however, when caught

singly is quickly despatched. When collected in a herd the case is very different. They then so fearlessly assail the jaguar with their sharp tusks, that though it may kill a few of them, it is usually pierced to death, or compelled to take to flight. We had good reason, therefore, to be thankful that the jaguar had not found us busy at work with our backs turned towards him; in which case he would probably have killed one or both of us. He must already, as Tim observed, have had his dinner, else he would not so readily have taken his departure. We found, indeed, not far off, the remains of a deer on which he had been feeding, several armadillos and a king-vulture being engaged in finishing what he had left of the feast.

While Tim was at work, I kept watch in case another jaguar or any other foe should approach. I regretted not having brought my bow and arrows, and determined never to leave home again without them.

The tree was soon cut down, for we were obliged to choose those of small size, which could be easily chopped through and split. As soon as it was down, Tim smoothed off the upper surface, and then drew lines along it to mark the divisions of the planks, scoring them deeply with his axe, ready for the wedges. Sometimes a tree split from one end to the other, and we quickly had a number of boards formed; which, however, required seasoning before they could be used. This operation took place more rapidly than in our

northern climes; for by placing them in the shade, though exposed to the air, they quickly dried.

Having cut a tree into planks, we each of us carried home a couple of them. I gave a description of Tim's encounter with the jaguar. Of course our friends congratulated us on our escape; and, taking warning, they determined to be on the look-out lest the creature should think fit to pay the settlement a visit.

CHAPTER XIII.

MARIAN'S FEARFUL DANGER—TIM'S WONDERFUL RIDE ON AN ALLIGATOR'S BACK—
MARIAN AND I RESCUED—DEATH OF THE ALLIGATOR.



OUR manufactures of various sorts went on with unabated vigour. We had already gained considerable skill in mat-making, and had tried various substances, some produced from different species of palms, and others from grass and sedges growing on the banks of the neighbouring stream or lake. We had also made a quantity of string, or what sailors call sennit, which, twisted together, would serve as cordage for the vessel. One of our great wants had been hammocks in which to sleep, they being far cooler and more healthy than standing bed-places. There was an objection, also, to sleeping on the ground: for we were liable to be stung by insects; and indeed venomous snakes might enter and remain undiscovered, coiled in the heaps of grass and dry leaves which formed our mattresses.

After we had made a quantity of sennit, Peter cut out some netting needles and pins, and set to work to net a hammock for himself. Others followed his

example, and soon each of us had a hammock slung in the hut ; which being stowed away in the daytime, gave us far more room than we had before enjoyed. Arthur and I made a sort of cot for Marian, in which she was able to sleep with more comfort than in the confined bunk the kind captain had at first made for her.

Uncle Paul had not forgotten his intention of trying to supply us with garments ; but as we had so many things to attend to, he had not as yet begun to make them. We had all, however, been supplied with straw-hats ; which, working as we were in the sun, were absolute necessities. The Indians had also to make frequent excursions in search of game and fruit to supply the community with food, so that we were never without an abundance of what we considered the necessaries of life. Kallolo had also manufactured some palm-wine and several refreshing beverages from fruit, chiefly of palms. Occasionally, too, Uncle Paul with a companion launched out into the lake on the smaller raft with hooks and lines, and invariably returned with a good supply of fish.

One day when he and Arthur had gone out for that purpose, Marian asked me to accompany her in search of a peculiarly elastic grass called the "capim grass," and two or three other sorts which grew on the banks of the stream. Tim and Sambo followed, to assist us in bringing back what we might collect ;

and Kallolo and Maco, wishing to shoot some birds, came with their blow-pipes and bows and arrows.

We had got nearly to the mouth of the stream, where there was some open ground, the trees not growing so closely down to the edge of the water as in other places. Tim and Sambo were together. I had gone a little way on, when Marian saw some of the grass of which she was in search. The Indians, who had just shot a toucan, were a little way behind me, waiting for the bird to drop. The waters having by this time considerably subsided, the stream was running much more rapidly than at first. I stopped to watch a log which was floating down, and I thought how convenient it would be to get hold of it and tow it on shore, as it would save us several hours' labour should it be fit for our ship-building purposes. Just then I caught sight of Uncle Paul and Arthur on the raft, they having come to the mouth of the stream; but of course they could not ascend it. I shouted to them, and pointed out the log.

At that moment I heard a piercing cry, and to my dismay I saw that Marian had fallen into the stream from a projecting point on which she had been standing, and that she was being rapidly hurried down by the current. What also was my unspeakable horror, when, almost at the same moment I caught sight of a huge alligator, which, with open jaws, rose to the surface, and was making directly for her! I shrieked out

to Kallolo, who had at the same instant caught sight of the creature. Quick as lightning he fixed an arrow to his bow, which he sent with unerring aim into the monster's eye. It had the effect he hoped for,—it made the alligator turn aside ; and apparently blinded, and unable to see where it was going, it darted up close to the bank. Tim and Sambo, seeing it coming, had sprung on to a tree which overhung the stream. Then Tim, instigated by an impulse for which he himself probably could not have accounted, leaped directly down on the creature's back, and digging the fingers of his left hand into its remaining eye, began so furiously to belabour it with a thick club he held in his right hand, that the astonished saurian dashed off through the water, madly lashing it into masses of foam with its huge tail. Under other circumstances I should have trembled for the gallant Tim's safety, but for the moment I could think of nothing but the fearful danger to which my dear young sister was exposed. I am very sure that it was the idea that he might help to save Marian which prompted him to the performance of the unexampled act of heroism. It may, however, be considered an Irish way of proceeding, as he would certainly have rendered her more service by swimming out and supporting her. As soon as I had recovered from my terror, which for the moment almost deprived me of reason, I leaped into the current and swam towards her.



Though at first almost paralyzed with fear, she had recovered her presence of mind, and had begun to strike out, so as to support herself above water. I swam with all my might to overtake her, dreading every moment lest another alligator should appear and seize one or both of us. The shouts and cries of the men, however, and the furious disturbance of the water caused by the monster Tim bestrode, effectually prevented any other from venturing out of its hiding-place; and therefore I believe Tim rendered us effectual aid.

Now up the stream, now across from one side to the other, the alligator and his rider dashed at a tremendous speed. The creature would have dived had not Tim, exerting all his strength, held back its head, thus keeping its jaws open, and preventing it from plunging. All this time Tim had been shouting to Sambo to come and join him on the creature's back, and to the Indians to shoot at it again; but Sambo, though a brave fellow, not having been accustomed to steeple-chasing in his youth, had no fancy for such a ride; and the Indians well knew that their arrows would glance harmlessly off the scaly back of the saurian, or that they were more likely rather to wound brave Tim himself. Still Tim held on in a way a practised fox-hunter could alone have done, hitting now on the monster's jaws, now behind him, and now on its side. It was a question who would first get tired, the Irishman or the alligator.

Meantime I had got close to Marian, and knowing the importance of keeping up as much noise as possible, I shouted and shrieked, telling her to do the same, while Uncle Paul and Arthur were making the most strenuous efforts with their paddles to reach us. It was important, indeed, that they should do so, for Marian's strength, overcome by her terror, was rapidly failing her. I did my utmost to keep her head above water; for I am very sure had she been alone she must have sunk. The Indians, seeing Uncle Paul and Arthur coming to our assistance, and knowing that I was a good swimmer, hastened up the bank with Sambo to aid Tim: for they saw that should the alligator hold out much longer, he would be compelled to let go its head; in which case it would have immediately dived to the bottom, and very probably have given him a fatal blow with its tail, or dragged him down along with it.

As I looked at Marian's countenance, I saw that it was becoming very pale. Her terror and the efforts she had made had completely overcome her. She fainted away. Still I kept her up, striking the water with my feet; for I could do no more. The current bore us rapidly down, and as I looked at the raft I feared that we should be swept past it. I knew that there was no use calling out to my friends, for they were already doing their very utmost. Those were indeed awful moments. The shouts and shrieks of Tim and the Indians sounding in my ears, I knew that they could

not be far off. I could even hear the noise made by the alligator as it furiously lashed the water with its tail ; and I expected every moment that it would rush down toward us, and perhaps strike us in its mad course, or dash against the raft and upset it. I dared not look around, but kept my eye on the raft, and with my right hand (for the left arm sustained Marian) I endeavoured to direct my course towards it. My great dread was that the shock she had received would prove too much for her, and that she would succumb to it. Every moment she pressed more heavily on my arm. My own strength, too, I felt, was failing me. Still I was encouraged by seeing Uncle Paul and Arthur coming nearer and nearer ; but even close though they were, there was still a possibility that Marian would slip from my grasp. My anxiety became almost greater than I could bear : a dimness came over my eyes—I was sinking. Then I felt that Marian was no longer on my arm. The next moment my hand was on the side of the raft, and I was safe in Uncle Paul's strong grasp. He was kneeling with Marian in his arms. I pressed my lips to hers to recall her to life. She opened her eyes, —my heart bounded with joy. She was still deadly pale, but she gently smiled, saying faintly, "I shall soon be well, Guy."

"Yes, yes ; our little maiden is safe, and will quickly be all right !" exclaimed Uncle Paul, though the

tremor in his voice showed that he had not even yet recovered from the fearful agitation he had experienced at seeing our danger.

From the time we had got on board the raft, Arthur had been paddling with might and main to regain the shore, where it now floated calmly out of the strength of the current. Having somewhat recovered, I was able to watch Tim and his strange steed. Whenever the alligator showed an inclination to go either up the stream or down to the lake, Tim turned it with a fierce blow of his shillalagh ; and thus kept it moving backwards and forwards between the two banks.

The Indians and Sambo had now got directly opposite the spot it generally reached in its rapid circuit, Kallolo carefully watching the movements of the monster while his companions were hastily cutting some long and tough trailing vines hanging from a neighbouring tree.

"Bear a hand ! bear a hand, or sure I will be after riding to 'Davy Jones's locker' sooner than will be altogether pleasant !" shouted Tim, gasping for breath.

"Keep up its head ! keep up its head !" cried the Indians in return,—a piece of advice Tim fully intended to follow as long as he had the power.

At length the alligator came directly towards Kallolo, who at that moment drawing his bow sent a poisoned arrow directly down its throat. The alligator, feeling the pain, turned round, and again dashed across the

stream ; but once more Tim managed to turn it with his well-dealt blows, and again it dashed back to the bank, close to where Kallolo stood. Throwing down his bow and quiver, the Indian, apparently doubting whether the poison would produce its usual effects on the monster, sprang forward into the water and drove his knife directly into its breast. As he did so it gave another fierce lash with its tail, but it was the last. The Indian drew out his knife, ready to repeat the blow, but there was no necessity for him to strike; the alligator rolled over from side to side, its head dropping in spite of Tim's efforts to keep it up.

"Jump off, or it will carry you to the bottom!" cried Kallolo ; who then, turning round, shouted to his companions to bring the rope. They came hurrying to the spot with a ready-made noose, which they dexterously slipped over the monster's head, Tim at the same moment, springing on its back, leaped from thence to the shore.

"I have mounted many a skittish horse when I was a spalpeen of a lad, but never in all my born days have I ridden so ill-mannered a baste ; and sure I hope as long as I live that I may not have to break in such another as this one," exclaimed the Irishman.

The Indians, while Tim was speaking, were getting ready their ropes, which they managed to slip round the monster's fore-legs ; then, all hands hauling away, they dragged it by slow degrees up the bank. As its

struggles were not over, the task was not so easy as it would have been had it been unable to offer any resistance. Its jaws continued to open, showing its captors that it would be wise to keep at a respectable distance. Kallolo, however, who did not fear to face it in the water, did not hesitate to rush in and give it several additional stabs.

Tim's mind had been so entirely occupied with the strange situation in which he found himself, that he had almost forgotten the cause which first prompted him to leap on the monster's back. As soon, however, as he was again on his feet, he recollected all about the matter, and seeing Marian and me on the raft, with wild shouts he came rushing towards us, exhibiting, by the most vehement gestures and extraordinary antics, his delight at our safety.

"Sure and she's safe, the darling Miss Marian!" he cried out as he sprang on board the raft; "and the brute of an alligator has not eaten her, as I was fearing he would have been after doing. It's a mighty fine counthry this, but it would be all the better if it was as free of them creatures as Ould Ireland is of snakes and sarpents,—blessings on the head of St. Patrick who drove them all out."

After he had calmed down a little, Uncle Paul directed him to take one of the paddles and to assist in navigating the raft home, while he himself attended to Marian. He was anxious to get her safely on shore,

and placed in her cot, where she might enjoy that rest she so much required. He and I sat by her side chafing her feet and hands. We wished that we had had some of the skipper's schiedam to give to her; but Uncle Paul had brought none with him, and we could think of no other remedies than those we were already applying. The sun striking down on us with its usual force, she did not feel any bad effects from being wet. The colour gradually returned to her cheeks, and we trusted that she would not suffer materially from the accident. Arthur and Tim exerted themselves to the utmost to urge on the raft. We had no difficulty in getting out of the river, as the current carried us rapidly down to its mouth. We then made good progress along the shore.

Uncle Paul felt even more anxious about Marian than I did. I had never seen him so affected. As she lay in his arms, he bent over her, uttering endearing expressions. "Cheer up, my little maiden," he said; "we shall soon be at home, and you will be all put right. We must not let you run such a risk again. These wilds are not suited for young girls to wander through alone, and you must remain in the encampment till we get our new craft ready for sea."

"I am not much frightened, and shall soon be quite myself again, I assure you," said Marian faintly. "Still I cannot help thinking about that dreadful alligator. It won't come after us, will it?"

"The young mistress need not be afraid of that, unless the baste has more lives than a Kilkenny cat," observed Tim, who had overheard her. "It's my belief that I'd have ridden the brute to death, even if Kallolo hadn't sent an arrow down its throat and stuck his long knife half a dozen times in it. The alligator is hauled up high and dry on shore, and the creature's ugly head is off its body by this time ; so you may be pretty sure that it'll not be after troubling you again."

Tim's account had at all events the effect of banishing from Marian's mind the idea that the alligator would follow us ; and Uncle Paul and I did our best to keep up her spirits too, and prevent her thoughts from recurring to the fearful danger she had gone through.

The time occupied in reaching our camp seemed very long ; but Marian was conveyed much more easily on the raft than she would have been through the tangled forest. Our father saw us coming, and hurrying down to the beach, assisted us in carrying up Marian to her hut. When he heard what had occurred, he was greatly agitated, and blamed himself for having allowed her to go on such an expedition. He agreed with Uncle Paul that she must not in future be permitted to leave the village without an escort, which must never for a moment quit her side.

The captain, who had been working at the vessel,

hearing of the accident, came hurrying to the hut with a bottle of schiedam under his arm. "My little maid! what should we have done had she been seized by the alligator? We should have lost all heart for work, and left our bones to whiten on the beach!" he exclaimed in an agitated voice, which showed how much he felt. "She must take some of this: it's the great remedy for all diseases; and I have kept it on purpose, resisting the temptation, when I felt inclined to take a drop to comfort my heart as I thought of my home, and my dear frau, and the months and months that must pass before I can see her again."

Uncle Paul gave Marian a small glassful of the schiedam, which undoubtedly had the good effect of sending her off into a sound sleep.

In a short time the Indians arrived with the head of the alligator, which they and Sambo proposed to preserve, in order, the latter said, to make a figure-head for the new vessel!

"We will think about it," answered Uncle Paul. "I doubt whether it would bring pleasant recollections to the mind of our little maiden. At any rate, we will carry it with us on board, and perhaps in after years she may be less unwilling to look at it than at present, when she may exhibit it to another generation as she describes our adventures in the wilds of the Orinoco."

CHAPTER XIV.

CAPTURE OF A YOUNG MACAW—THE POTTERY MANUFACTORY AND OTHER EMPLOYMENTS—THE INDIA-RUBBER OR SERINGA TREE—HOW UNCLE PAUL MADE OUR SHOES—THE IGUANA—CAPTURE A CURASSOW AND A TAPIR—MARIAN'S ENCOUNTER WITH THE LABARRI SNAKE—A LAUGHABLE SCENE.



UACKO and Ara, though the only idle members on our estate, were, contrary to the usual rule, perfectly happy, and certainly afforded us all constant amusement. Tim observed that they were growing conceited, and thought too much of themselves. He proposed, therefore, to try to catch a few more pets, in order to teach them to behave properly, and to show them that they were not of so much importance as they were inclined to suppose. Tim, whenever he could get away from work, was fond of making exploring expeditions on either side of the settlement. He had discovered, not far off, the roosting-place of a flock of macaws, and had determined to capture one. I reminded him of the way Arthur and I had been attacked when we had attempted to rob their nests on Grove Island.

"To be sure, Master Guy; but it will be a very different matter here," he answered. "We shall be on

firm ground, and able to use our legs if they attack us; for, as you see, they are all perched up on the trees, and will not be inclined to come off for the sake of looking after a friend or two who may tumble to the ground."

Tim had told Kallolo of his intention, and we all set off together, Kallolo with his blow-pipe, Tim and I with our bows and arrows. Tim, in addition, carried a long mat fastened at one end, a string being drawn through the other. Kallolo told us, as he went along, that had he possessed some salt he should have had no difficulty in catching as many macaws alive as we might wish for; but as yet we had not discovered that necessary of life.

We soon reached the birds' roosting-place; but no sooner did they see us than, contrary to Tim's expectations, they all arose and began circling round our heads, screaming vociferously. Kallolo, looking on calmly, did not shoot. Tim and I let fly a couple of arrows, but both missed. At last the birds began to settle down, and I again shot an arrow, when down tumbled a young macaw. The missile had passed through its wing. Away it scuttled, uttering loud shrieks from pain and terror. Tim and I made chase, he holding the mat with the joined part in front ready to throw over the bird. We quickly overtook it, when, finding that it could not escape, it turned round and did battle bravely for its liberty, attempting to bite

our legs with its sharp beak ; but Tim's sack was speedily over it, and drawing the string, he had it a close prisoner. Meantime Kallolo had brought down three of its companions with his deadly blow-pipe. Though they struggled at first, they speedily succumbed to the effects of the poison, and were tied by the feet and slung over his back.

Laden with our prizes we returned homewards. The dead birds were at once stripped of their feathers, spitted, and placed before the fire to roast for supper ; for had they been allowed to cool they would have proved somewhat tough, but treated as they were they were perfectly tender. The live macaw was allowed to remain in the bag all night, when its spirit being somewhat quelled by hunger, we gave it some nuts, which it took readily ; and in the course of the day it consented to come out and get a string tied round its leg. At night it went to roost ; and by the next morning it was perfectly tame, and willingly took the fruit and nuts offered it. Its plumage was blue and yellow ; and though not so pretty as some of its more gaily coloured relatives, as its temper improved it became a great favourite.

We had by this time erected a complete village of huts. The good captain and his mate, that we might have more room, had built one for themselves. Tim and Sambo put up another, and the three Indians erected a fifth. They had no pretensions to architec-

tural beauty, but were quite sufficient for all the shelter required in that warm climate. For our dining-hall we had an open shed, where we were sheltered from the rays of the sun. We were also making good progress with the vessel: the stem and the stern, with several ribs, had already been fixed. Cutting out the ribs with the scanty tools we possessed was a slow process; and a Dutchman alone could have conceived the possibility of succeeding in such an undertaking, with the numerous difficulties to be encountered.

"Never fear, my friends; we will do it," the skipper was continually saying. "Only take care not to break the axes. If we do, we shall have to work with our knives. But remember it could be done even then; only we should be much longer about the job. 'Slow and steady wins the race.'"

Slow our work certainly was, but every day saw some progress. While the captain and Peter were working at the timber, the rest of us were smoothing down the planks; and we had now a large pile ready to fix on as soon as the ribs were set up. My father, Marian, and I were improving in the manufacture of matting. We could not, however, make it of sufficient strength for the sails; still, the material we manufactured would serve to form a roof for the cabin, or it might do for kilts or for cloaks.

We had established several other manufactories. A pottery was the first. Fortunately, we had found

some clay well adapted for our purpose; and my father was acquainted with the principles of the art and the mode of working. A small kiln was first put up; and we then, kneading our clay, formed it into vessels of various shapes and sizes. Our great object was to burn some sufficiently hard to serve for cooking purposes. We cracked a good many, and it must be confessed they were all somewhat rough and unshapely; but we improved in that respect, and eventually succeeded in producing several pots which stood the fire remarkably well. At Uncle Paul's desire, we also formed a number of small cups, though he did not at the time tell us for what object he required them.

He had not forgotten his promise to supply us with shoes when ours should be worn out. We had for some time been going about with bare feet. We found it, however, both painful and dangerous to wander through the forest with our feet unprotected. I reminded him one day of what he had undertaken to do.

"I have not forgotten it, and will at once fulfil my promise," he answered. "Come with me into the forest; before we start, however, you must pack up the small pots you made at my request the other day."

"What are they for?" I asked.

"You shall see when we arrive at the manufactory," he answered.

We set out towards the west. After having proceeded some way we found, scattered here and there

among the other trees, a number of trees of great height, and from two to three feet in diameter. The trunks were round and strong, and the bark of a light colour, and not very smooth. Their summits did not spread wide, but their appearance was especially beautiful, from their long, thin leaves, which grew in clusters of three together, and were of an ovate shape, the centre one rather more than a foot in length, the others a little shorter.

"These are seringa trees," said Uncle Paul, pointing them out. "It is with the sap which proceeds from them that I purpose to manufacture our shoes."

I stared with astonishment, for I saw that he was not joking. He now took the pots, to which strings had been fastened, and secured two or three to each tree by small pegs, which he took out of his pocket. Above each peg he made a deep incision with his stone axe, and almost immediately a milky substance began to ooze out and drop into the pots. Taking some himself, he bade me taste it, assuring me that it was perfectly harmless. Its taste was agreeable,—much like sweetened cream, which it resembled in colour.

We went on from tree to tree, cutting deeply into the bark of each, and hanging up our pots till we had exhausted all we carried. This being done, all hands under his direction set to work to build a hut; and he then bade the Indians search for a nut of a peculiar palm which was required for the operation.

These preliminary operations being concluded, we returned to the settlement, where Uncle Paul set us to work to form several lasts suited to the size of the feet of the different members of the party. He made a pair for Marian; but the rest of us, he said, must be content with shoes of the same shape for both feet; and though very rough, and not very well shaped, they would answer our purpose. We had not time to bestow much labour on them.

Next morning we again set out, carrying this time a couple of large bowls, which, Uncle Paul said, would be required. On arriving at the hut, he placed one of them on the ground, and then piled up inside the hut a number of the palm-nuts collected on the previous day. Having surrounded them with stones, he placed the bowl, in the bottom of which a hole had been made, in an inverted position on the top of them. We next went out to collect the pots we had hung up on the seringa trees. They were all full of juice, and were brought to the hut and emptied into the other bowl. This done, we took the pots back and hung them up again. The lasts we now smeared with clay, of which some had been found at hand. The nuts were lighted, and a dense white smoke ascended through the hole in the bottom of the bowl. One of the lasts, to which wooden handles had been fixed, we now dipped into the bowl of india-rubber juice; and when it was drawn out, a thin layer of juice was found adhering to it. On

being held over the smoke this quickly dried, and became rather darker than at first. The process was repeated a dozen times, till the shoe was of sufficient thickness ; care being taken to give a greater number of coatings to the sole. We found, after a little time, that the various operations required about five minutes, —then the shoe was complete. One after another the lasts were dipped in the same way ; and the shoes were then hung on cross sticks which had been put up outside the hut, that they might be exposed to the sun. There being no risk of our shoes being stolen, we left them, and returned home as before, having plenty of occupation for the rest of the day.

Next morning we went back to the hut, and having collected the juice which had in the meantime trickled into the pots, we finished off the shoes which had been made on the previous day ; and having scored the soles to prevent them from slipping, we cut them off the lasts, which were thus ready again for use. We now manufactured some more shoes and left them to dry, carrying with us those which had just been finished. Marian was delighted with hers, which were very soft and elastic, though they would not do to walk far in.

We had now not only the means of making shoes, but bottles and cups ; and Uncle Paul even thought of manufacturing a material which would serve instead of cloth, and might be formed into cloaks and kilts, if not trousers—though, as he had no substance to lay it on,

he was afraid that it would easily tear. We agreed, however, that, except in rainy weather, the matting was likely to prove the more useful article.

We were returning from our india-rubber manufactory the next day, when we saw an object moving among the boughs of a tree at no great distance from us. Tim ran forward to ascertain what it was.

"Arrah now, if it's not a live alligator, I don't know what it is," he exclaimed. "It's my belief that the baste has climbed up into the tree that he may pounce down upon us as we pass by."

"No fear of that," answered Uncle Paul. "Alligators, although they venture out of the water, never go far from it. The creature you see, large as it looks, is only an iguana, a sort of lizard which lives in trees; and though it is ugly to look-at, it is said to be very good to eat, so we will try to get the gentleman."

On getting under the tree, we saw what certainly looked like a huge lizard, about four feet in length, including its long tail. The tree not being a large one, we shook it, when down came the creature to the ground. In spite of its rather formidable appearance, Tim dashed boldly forward and caught it by the neck and the small of the back, and held it fast. It lashed about very fiercely with its tail, its only weapon of defence, as its teeth, though numerous, were small. Uncle Paul having formed a noose, slipped it over the creature's head and told me to hold it tight while he

made another, which he dexterously threw over its tail. Tim and I then going ahead began to drag it along; and though it made some resistance, we at length got it to the settlement.

As we knew that Marian would like to see it alive, Uncle Paul went to call her. The creature, with its huge dew-lap, ugly face, long claws, and row of spines on its back, looked indeed truly formidable. Marian, who with Arthur and our father soon came, recollecting all about the alligator, cried out under the idea that it might break loose and attack us. Just at that moment the after-rope, which Tim was holding loosely, slipped off the tail of the creature; when finding that member at liberty, it began to lash about with it on every side. Tim thoughtlessly rushed forward to seize it; but it gave him a cut on the leg, which brought him to the ground howling with pain; and had not Uncle Paul hauled him out of the creature's way, he might have received a still more serious blow. As it showed an inclination to inflict further damage, Sambo coming up speedily despatched it by a blow on the head. Ugly as it looked, he assured us that it would afford us most delicious food; and at dinner-time we found his prediction amply fulfilled. We had become so accustomed to eat odd-looking creatures, that however repulsive the appearance of an animal, we never hesitated to try it; and we agreed that we should have no objection to eat another iguana as soon as one could be caught.

Kallolo was our chief hunter ; and Arthur and I, when we could spare time from our regular work, were glad, for the sake of variety, to go out with him. We were walking along the shore of the lake, when from the top of a low tree a huge bird, its plumage chiefly black, with a crest of curled feathers on its head and a white breast, flew off over the water.

"We have lost the bird, but we will try to find something instead," said Kallolo, giving me his blow-pipe and bow to hold. He then climbed up the tree till he reached the bird's nest, from which he extracted two eggs, and brought them down safely. They were considerably larger than a duck's egg, white and granulated all over, though the bird itself did not appear to be above the size of an ordinary duck. It was, I found, a crested curassow. The eggs being newly laid were very palatable. Kallolo then ascended the tree again and laid a snare, hoping to catch the hen-bird ; which, he said, might become domesticated, if carefully treated.

As we were going through the forest shortly afterwards I heard a rustling sound among the underwood, and saw, close ahead of me, a dark-skinned creature about the size of a calf rush on towards the water. Its head, of which I caught a glimpse, was peculiarly long, with a proboscis-like snout. I guessed from this that the animal was a tapir. Calling to Kallolo, I told him what I had seen. He came up, and examining the

ground, gave it as his opinion that the creature frequently passed that way, and that he had little doubt we should be able to catch it.

On returning to the settlement he invited Tim and Sambo to accompany him, and to dig a pit in which to catch the animal. We had a short time before manufactured some wooden spades, which served very well for digging in soft ground: we each took one, and Kallolo having fixed on a spot over which he considered the tapir was accustomed to pass, we set to work to dig the pit. The tapir being unable to climb, we made our pit only about four feet deep, seven long, and four wide. Having shovelled away the earth as far as we could throw it, we covered the pit over with thin branches and light twigs, which would at once give way under the animal's weight.

Next morning, as the rest of the party were busily employed, I alone accompanied Kallolo. We each carried a spade, with some rope and pieces of matting. We first visited the tree on which he had set the snare for the curassow. As we approached we observed a fluttering on the top of it, and there, sure enough, was the bird caught by the legs. Kallolo climbed up, and detaching the snare from the tree brought the bird safely to the ground. It was too much frightened to attempt resistance, and before it recovered, the Indian had covered its head up with a piece of matting, so that it could not see; and then taking it under his

arm, we set off to examine our pit. Even before we got up to it, we saw that the covering had given way; and sure enough, there was the tapir safe within. The creature could not turn round, and was standing perfectly still, utterly unable to help itself. Kallolo had brought a bag, the mouth secured by a string; this he managed to slip over its head, so that it, like the curassow, was completely blindfolded. He then passed another rope round its fore-legs, and passing the end round the trunk of a tree, hauled it tight. Putting the curassow on the ground, with its legs tied, Kallolo begged me to assist him in throwing a quantity of earth over the front of the pit. In a short time we had made an incline, up which the tapir of its own accord climbed; expecting, probably, when at the top to find itself free. In this it was disappointed; but its strength being considerable, it would speedily have broken loose had not its eyes been blindfolded. Kallolo now approaching, spoke to it in soothing terms, patted it on the back, and at length it stood perfectly still, its alarm having apparently been completely calmed.

"We will now return home with our prizes, and I hope that in a short time they will become tame," he observed; and having transferred the rope from its legs to its neck, he led it along, while I followed with the curassow. On our arrival with our two prizes we were warmly greeted by all hands, and Marian begged that she might be allowed to tame the bird.

"I should like to make friends with the tapir," she added ; "but I am afraid that it would prove an unruly pupil."

"You need not be afraid of that," said Kallolo. "In a short time the tapir will become as tame as a dog, and will follow you about wherever you go."

Kallolo certainly exhibited a wonderful skill in taming animals. He managed to do so entirely by kindness, though in the first instance he starved them to make them ready to receive food from his hands. He did not, however, allow the tapir to go loose for some days, but regularly brought it the food he knew it liked best. He then took it down to the water to bathe, keeping the rope tight that it might not swim off.

Marian imitated his example with regard to her curassow; and the bird soon knew her, and showed its pleasure when she approached with its favourite fruit. At length, feeling pretty sure that it would not fly away, she let it loose just before its usual feeding time, and then held out some fruit which she had got in readiness. The bird flew towards her; and from that day followed her about wherever she went. "Crass" (the name we gave to the curassow) soon became a great favourite, and made Quacko and Ara very jealous. The monkey would, now and then, steal down and slyly try to pluck the feathers out of Crass, which would immediately run for pro-

tection to Marian; while Ara would fly down and perch on its head, and peck at its crest.

We had now a little menagerie. Three parrots, of different species, and another monkey, had been added to our collection. The tapir became perfectly domesticated, and could be trusted to go out and have a bathe by itself, when it would invariably come back and lie down in front of our hut, knowing that it was there safe from its arch enemy the jaguar. We, however, could not bestow much time on our animals, as we were employed in the more important business of building our vessel and supplying our larder. We were never, indeed, in want of food, but we had to consider the means of preserving a supply for our voyage. The days passed quickly by; and though the carpenters appeared to work very slowly, each day saw the vessel further advanced, and it was a satisfaction to count the numerous ribs which now rose from the keel of our vessel.

We were all at work one day on the vessel, with the exception of Tim and Sambo, who had gone out to fish on the lake at a short distance from the shore, when cunning Master Quacko, observing us engaged, and catching sight of Crass feeding at a little distance from the huts, slyly stole towards her. Crass turned her head just in time to see him coming, and recollecting that she had wings as well as legs, rose in the air and flew towards a neighbouring tree. Quacko,

who had not forgotten the art of climbing, made chase, and soon got up to the bough on which Crass was perched. Crass, who had been watching him, flew off to another tree close to the shore of the lake. Quacko, however, liking the fun, threw himself from bough to bough and drove Crass further and further off. Marian, who had been busy at her loom, looking up caught sight of Quacko and Crass flying away in the far distance. Guessing the cause of her favourite's flight, she ran to call Quacko back, and to try to recover her bird. As she was making her way through the thick underwood, I fortunately happened to see her, and calling to Arthur, we both ran to her assistance. So thick was the forest, however, at this spot, that we soon lost sight of her; and though we shouted to her to return, she made no reply. Recollecting the fearful danger to which she had before been exposed on the bank of the stream, I could not help fearing that some accident had happened to her.

We went on till we saw Crass on the bough of a tree just ahead of us, and I was sure that Marian could not be far off. Just then it occurred to me that she was perhaps only trying to frighten us; so, instead of following her further, I resolved to climb the tree and secure the bird. Calling to Arthur, we both easily mounted by means of several sepos which hung down from it, and of three or four boughs which projected from the lower part of the trunk. No sooner had

Arthur and I got up than we caught sight of Marian clinging to a palm-tree, horror depicted in her countenance as she gazed at something on the ground. At the same moment Crass flew off towards her; while Arthur, exclaiming, "A snake! a snake! it is about to attack her," leaped down to her assistance. It was a moment of fearful suspense. I expected to see the horrible reptile spring at my sister. It appeared to me, as I caught sight of its head, to be one of the most venomous species—the labarri.

Just then I heard a voice shout out, "Stay quiet, Miss Marian, and keep your eye fixed on the creature."

I did not till then observe that the raft had come close in, and I now saw Sambo, who had leaped from it, making rapidly towards the shore with a long stick in his hand. The snake, whose tail had been coiled round the root of a tree, had all the time remained perfectly still, though uttering ominous hisses. In another instant the reptile would have made its fatal spring; but Sambo, climbing up the bank, dealt it a furious blow on the head. This made it uncoil its tail; then he followed up the attack by a second blow. The snake dropped its head.

Marian, relieved of her terror, fell fainting to the ground just as Arthur and I reached her, while Crass immediately came flying down to her feet. Having satisfied ourselves that the snake was really killed,

we hastened back with Marian to the settlement, followed by Crass, which came willingly after its mistress. She was so nervous, however, that she could with difficulty walk. At every instant she started, as if expecting to see another snake appear before her to dispute her passage. Quacko, who knew very well that he had been misbehaving, made his way back before us; and when we arrived we found him seated in front of the hut, looking as sedate as a judge, evidently fancying that his conduct had been unobserved.

We again charged Marian not to leave the camp by herself, warning her that she might not only meet with another snake, but might fall in, perhaps, with a prowling jaguar or puma, or an anaconda, such as had attacked us on the lake.

"But I could not bear the thought of losing my dear Crass; and I had no idea that I should have been led so far away," she answered, almost crying, as if she had done something wrong.

"We are not blaming you, my dear Marian," said Uncle Paul, "but cautioning you for your own benefit,—and ours, too, for we should be miserable should any harm happen to you. People, when they begin to act imprudently, never can tell where they may stop; and a very good lesson may be imparted to others from your adventure and the fearful danger to which you have been exposed. But do not suppose,

my dear, that we blame you, though you did give us all a great fright. We must appoint a guard, not to watch you, but to protect you from danger."

"Oh, do not draw any one off from the important work in which you are all engaged, for my sake," exclaimed Marian. "I will be very prudent in future, indeed, I will; and if any of my favourites run away, I will immediately come to you, that, if you think fit, somebody may be sent to bring them back."

Marian's resolution was sorely tried a few days afterwards. The Ara parrot, the companion of our troubles, which had learned to speak, as Tim averred, as well as a real Christian, and was so very affectionate and domesticated, took it into its head, from some unknown cause, to fly off before Marian's eyes. According to her promise, she did not follow it, though she believed that it had perched on a tree not far off, but hurried to where we were at work. When, however, Maco went to look for it, the bird was nowhere to be seen. The whole day passed by, and Marian began to give up all hopes of ever recovering her pet. The next morning our attention was attracted by the most extraordinary noises, arising from a flock of parrots at a little distance. Now all was hushed; then again there broke forth a torrent of screams, which reminded us of the noise made by a flock of crows gathered around a solitary owl found out of its ivy-mantled tower after sunrise. What was the cause

of the noise? No one could decide. Arthur suggested that the tree-tops thereabout might form a parliament-house to the surrounding nation of parrots, and that, their session having commenced, they had met to discuss some new legislative act for the good of the community, or, perhaps, some point calculated to lead to a general war,—the overbearing conduct of the macaws, or the increasing insults of the parrakeets.

With bows and blow-pipes in hand, Arthur, Tim, and I, and the three Indians, crept silently towards them, when, to our great astonishment, we discovered the cause of the hubbub. Mounted full in view on a tree-top stood Master Ara; while around him, upon adjacent branches, were collected a host of his peers! There was a pause.

“Haul away! ye ho, boys!” came down from the top of the tree, followed by bursts of imitative shrieks and vociferous applause. “Ha! ha! ha!” shouted Master Ara, as he rolled his head and doubled up his body quite beside himself with laughter. Then came tumultuous applause and encores, and further shouts of “Ha! ha! ha! Haul away! ye ho, boys!” Then Ara spread his wings, and began with evident delight to bow and dance, and to turn round and round on the bough he had chosen for his rostrum. The effect upon his auditory was remarkable. Every parrot began to twist and to turn about in the same fashion, endeavouring with very considerable success to utter

the same sounds, till we might have supposed that the crew of a merchant ship were shouting together, and engaged in weighing anchor to put to sea. Presently one of the assembly caught sight of us, and giving the alarm to the others, they suddenly changed their hilarious notes to cries of alarm, when off they flew, leaving Ara to harangue to empty benches, or rather to vacant boughs ; for he, not holding us in dread, did not deem it necessary to decamp.

The question now was how to catch him. Kallolo's blow-pipe could have brought him down from his lofty perch ; but it would have been at the risk of preparing him for parrot-pie, and our object was to take him alive. Had we possessed any salt, Kallolo said that there would have been no danger, as a few grains would have effectually neutralized the effects of the poison.

"Sure he would come if the mistress were to call him," observed Tim.

Arthur, thinking so too, ran back and brought Marian ; who, indeed, was very willing to come. On our retiring out of sight, she began to call to Ara, using the endearing expressions she had been accustomed to apply to him. He looked down and nodded, and then flew to a lower bough. She went on, and held out her hand with some palm-fruit, of which he was especially fond. Again he descended ; and at length, attracted partly by her sweet voice, and partly, it may be suspected, by the sweet fruit, came

and perched on her hand. Then she took him back in triumph to the settlement, telling him, as she did so, how imprudent he had been to run away so far.

"Remember, Ara," I heard her say, with all the gravity possible, "people, when they begin to act imprudently, never can tell where they may stop. You might have been caught by a tree-snake, or by some savage vulture, and we should never have seen you more. Promise me never to go wandering again without a proper escort ;—you will, won't you?"

"Haul away! ye ho, boys!" answered Ara. "Ha! ha! ha!"

This was the only reply she could obtain. She, however, as the bird nestled affectionately in her arms, seemed perfectly satisfied that he would not again go gadding.

CHAPTER XV.

NAMING OUR VESSEL—SAMBO'S SUGAR MANUFACTORY—THE WONDERFUL COW-TREE—TIM'S "BEAUTIFUL PIG"—TREED BY PECCARIES—A JAGUAR RENDERS US A VALUABLE SERVICE—PEACH-PALMS—KALLOLO CAPTURES THE CURIOUS JACANA—A LUCKY FIND—IN SEARCH OF TURTLES—GOOD LUCK—LAUNCH OF THE "GOOD HOPE"—"FLY! FLY! THE SAVAGES ARE COMING!"—A NARROW ESCAPE—OUR VILLAGE SET ON FIRE.



WE had a grand discussion one evening as to the name to be bestowed on our new vessel. Various appellations were suggested. Arthur proposed that she should be called the "Marian;" Tim, who had a voice in the matter, suggested the "Erin."

"The 'Fair Maiden' would be a fitting name," said the mate Peter, bowing with the gallantry of a sailor to my young sister.

"Oh no! pray don't name the vessel after me," exclaimed Marian; "for though I am obliged to Mr. Peter, yet I am sure I am no longer a 'fair maiden.'"

It had never occurred to me to think about the matter; but now, as I looked at her sweet countenance, I saw that it was tanned almost to a nut-brown hue,

and covered over with still darker freckles—the result of constant exposure to the air and hot sun.

"Now, with all due respect for Miss Marian, I consider that we may find a better name than any hitherto suggested," observed the skipper. "I propose that our vessel be called the *Good Hope*. Although not yet finished, we have 'good hope' that she will be; and we have also 'good hope' that, escaping the Spanish cruisers, and storms and rocks and shoals, she will carry us safely to Stabroek. What say you, Mr. Paul?"

"The *Good Hope*—the *Good Hope*," said Uncle Paul, repeating the name several times. "I like it. Yes, yes; it is a fitting name—a good name. Our craft has been the result of faith in One who watches over us—of skill and energy and perseverance; and such must always afford 'good hope' of success. What do you say, brother Dennis?"

"I have felt too often that I have bidden farewell to 'hope' in any form to venture on selecting such a name; and yet, if you are pleased so to call our craft, I should be content to embark on board the *Good Hope*; and should she carry us to civilized lands in safety, I might believe once more that there is hope for me, even in this world," answered my father.

I had been inclined to agree with Arthur; but as the elders of the party seemed to consider that the name of *Good Hope* was the proper one, I voted for

it, and Marian did likewise. Thus it was settled that our vessel was to be called the *Good Hope*; and so we ever afterwards designated her.

As she approached completion, the hunters were urged to be diligent in endeavouring to procure the means of provisioning her for the voyage. We at once built two kilns for drying fish and flesh, to assist the preserving powers of the hot sun. Several large periecus were caught, cut up, and dried in the sun, and then smoked; but though wholesome and nutritious, they were not considered very palatable. As fruits and nuts became ripe they were gathered in large quantities, and Marian exerted her skill in drying the former.

"If I had some sugar, I would make a supply of preserves," she observed, as she examined a basket of palm fruit, and several varieties of plums, which we had brought in. "I often assisted at home, and know perfectly well how to manage."

I remembered one day having seen some long canes, which I took for ordinary reeds, growing among the abundant vegetation. I now tried to recollect whereabouts they were.

"I know," exclaimed Sambo. "They be wild sugar-cane."

"How do you know that?" I asked.

"Because I suck 'em, and dey berry sweet," he answered, grinning as only a well-satisfied negro can

grin, having, of all the human race, a mouth specially adapted for the purpose.

"Then do you think you could find them again, Sambo?" I asked.

"Oh yes, massa! I will bring home enough to make sugar for all the preserves Miss Marian can make."

"But when we have cut the canes, how is the sugar to be manufactured?" I inquired.

"I do dat," he answered. "I long on sugar plantation in Jamaica, and know how to make sugar as well as any nigger slave."

Sambo at once set out, and soon brought back a load of sugar-canes—a convincing proof that they grew in the neighbourhood. We all tried them; and for several days each member of our community was to be seen walking about with a piece of sugar-cane in his mouth. Sambo was an ingenious mechanic, and forthwith set to work to construct a sugar manufactory. It was very simple, consisting of a number of our largest clay pots for boiling the juice, and a long trough with sides, and a board at each end, slightly inclining towards the pans. Into the trough fitted a huge stone,—a large round boulder, to which ropes were attached, for hauling it backwards and forwards. The canes being placed in the trough, the heavy weight passing over them pressed out the juice, which ran through holes in the lower end into the

bowls. The fuel which had previously been placed under the bowls was then lighted. As soon as the juice became hot, the impure portions rose in the form of scum, which was skimmed off. Sambo had found some lime, with which he formed lime-water to temper the liquor. The boiling process over, the fires were allowed to go out, and the liquor was then poured out into fresh pans, in which it was again gently boiled. It was afterwards transferred to a number of open wooden boxes, where it was allowed to cool, while the molasses ran off into pans placed beneath them, the part remaining in the boxes being in the form of crystals. Another draining process was then gone through, when really very respectable-looking sugar was produced.

"It would not fetch anything of a price in the market," observed my father; "but I have no doubt that Marian will find it good enough to preserve her fruit."

Marian was delighted, and assured Sambo that his sugar would answer very well indeed. "If we could find some tea-plants, we might have a pleasanter beverage for breakfast than either cold water or palm wine," observed Marian; "though, to be sure, we should have no milk to mix with it."

"I don't despair of finding that," said Uncle Paul; "indeed. I can promise to bring you some fresh milk directly you can produce the tea. I only yester-

day caught sight of the massaranduba, or cow-tree ; and as it is not far off, I will this evening bring you a bowlful of the juice, which, when fresh, you will be unable to distinguish from the finest milk."

Marian was of course very eager to see this wonderful vegetable milk ; and in the evening Uncle Paul set out with a large bowl. Sambo and I accompanied him, Sambo carrying an axe. On going some distance through the forest, we saw a tree with deeply-scored reddish and rugged bark.

"Surely nothing like white juice can come out of so rough a skin," I observed to Uncle Paul.

"Wait till Sambo has put his axe through it.—Cut hereabouts, Sambo," he said, pointing to a part of the trunk under which he could hold the bowl.

The black did as directed, and made a deep incision, following it up by other cuts.

"That's enough," exclaimed Uncle Paul ; and having, as he spoke, placed the bowl beneath the cut, there literally gushed forth a stream of the purest white milk, so rapidly that the bowl was quickly filled. I smelt it and tasted it ; and though it might have been said to be a little coarse, I certainly should have supposed it to be pure milk. Uncle Paul cautioned us not to drink much, as, swallowed in any considerable quantity, it is looked upon as unwholesome.

We returned with the bowl full, Sambo having carried it on his head. Marian was of course de-

lighted with it, though she could not give us tea. Kallolo had brought her a berry, however, which he assured her was perfectly wholesome, and which, when pounded and boiled, afforded a fair substitute for coffee. I suspect, indeed, that it was wild coffee, and that the original seed had been brought to the spot by some bird.

We had thus secured a very palatable beverage, and had obtained milk and sugar to mix with it; but my father still had a fancy for procuring tea, or at all events a substitute for it.

"If we find any, it will be a satisfaction when we drink it to remember that it is not taxed," he observed, "and that the revenue derived from it will not be spent in a way over which we have no control."

My poor father was alluding at the time to one of the grievances which the American colonies had already begun to feel very severely. We hunted in vain, however, for any shrub whose leaves were at all to be compared with those of the tea-tree of China, though we made several decoctions which afforded us refreshing beverages.

On the borders of the small lake Kallolo had discovered a large quantity of wild rice, on which numberless water-fowl fed. We collected an ample supply of the seed, and found it very useful in lieu of other farinaceous food. After it had been well stewed, it assisted to fricassee macaws, parrots, and monkeys,

which formed our staple diet. We had long got over anything like squeamishness as to what we ate ; and it was evident that our food agreed with us, for we were all as fat and strong as we could desire—indeed, accustomed as we had become to the life we were leading, no one complained of hardships or scanty fare. We certainly had to work for our subsistence, and the food did not exactly drop into our mouths ; but we were sure to get it by exerting ourselves.

We caught two more tapirs in our pitfall ; but being older than the first, they showed no inclination to become domesticated, so we were compelled to kill them, and to cut up and dry their flesh—which, though rather tough, was not otherwise unpalatable. Notwithstanding the quantity around him, Tim often sighed for a good fat pig.

“ Sure, there’s nothing like pork after all ; and I wish we could have two or three fat grunTERS to keep happy and contented in the corner of our hut, just as they may be seen in many cabins in the ‘ould country,’ ” he exclaimed one day. “ They would remind us of home more than anything else.”

I recollected Tim’s remark when, shortly afterwards, he came rushing in from the direction of our pitfall, exclaiming as he approached,—“ Hurrah ! hurrah !—a real ‘ beautiful pig ’ has been caught ; but the baste looked as if his mind was so ill at ease, that I thought it prudent not to slip down and help him

out ; so, if any one will come and assist me, sure we'll soon make the beginning of a piggery."

Uncle Paul, Sambo, and I, carrying some rope between us, hastened off to get out the pig. On reaching the pitfall, Uncle Paul, looking down, exclaimed,—“It was well, Tim, that you did not jump in to help out your friend. Just see his mouth !” And poking the end of his stick in front of the creature’s nose, it exhibited a pair of tusks sharp as lancets. “It is a pig, certainly, but very unlike the pig of northern lands,” he observed. “This creature is a peccary ; and though it is of no great size, it is one of the most savage little animals in existence. A herd of them will run down a jaguar ; and though he may slay a few with his paws, they will soon worry him to death with their sharp tusks, having nothing like fear in their composition. We will take the precaution of securing it before we haul it out, or it will be sure to do some of us an injury.”

A noose having been formed, it was slipped over the peccary’s head, and the animal was hauled out and quickly despatched. Uncle Paul then showed us a gland on the hinder part of the back, which he carefully cut out, remarking that unless this was done it would impart a disagreeable flavour to the rest of the meat. Tim and Sambo, after having secured it to the end of a long stick, carried it in triumph to the settlement. We found the meat excellent ; and

what we could not eat was smoked and laid by for the voyage.

Tim was still dissatisfied at not being able to tame a few peccaries to keep in his hut. He had sallied forth at daybreak one morning, bow in hand, in search of game, promising to be back at breakfast. When breakfast-time came, however, Tim did not appear. Arthur and I waited for an hour or more, till we became somewhat anxious about our faithful follower, and at last determined to go in search of him. We had noted the direction he had taken, and hoped, therefore, to get upon his track. We first visited the pit-fall. It was empty ; but we caught sight of some recently broken twigs some way beyond, which showed that he had gone further. On we went, therefore, shooting several birds which came in our way.

We were pushing on, when we heard a voice which we knew to be Tim's shouting out, "Up a tree ! up a tree, gentlemen—for your lives !" We looked round. Fortunately one was near, the branches of which enabled us, without difficulty, to climb up it. At that instant we caught sight of several dozen black-skinned creatures rushing towards us. Up the tree we sprang ; and scarcely had we got a few feet from the ground when a whole herd of peccaries came rushing towards us, ploughing up the ground with their tusks, and exhibiting other signs of rage.

No sooner had we seated ourselves on a bough than

we made out Tim a little way off, perched in the same manner upon another tree. It was pretty clear that he had been besieged by the herd, as we now were.

We shouted to him, inquiring how long he had been there.

"For the last two hours or more," was his answer. "I was just walking through the forest on my way home when these terrible little bastes caught sight of me; and if I had not sprung up this tree like lightning, they would have dug their sharp tusks into my legs. Though I have shot every arrow I had at my back, and have killed half a score of them, nothing I could do would make them go away; and by my faith, too, the brutes seem determined to starve us out."

This was not pleasant, as we might expect to be treed in the same manner. We determined, however, to do what we could to put the peccaries to flight, and began shooting away; taking good aim, that we might not uselessly expend our arrows. The little brutes kept rushing about below us, now and then charging against the trunk of the tree, and then looking up at us with their wicked eyes, evidently wishing that we might slip and tumble down among them.

"A pretty condition we should be in if we did so," I remarked to Arthur.

"Take care what you are about, then," he answered. "Keep your feet firmly fixed on the branch below you before you shoot."

We were standing up on one branch, leaning against another some way above it,—a good situation for our purpose. We had killed nearly a dozen peccaries; still the animals seemed totally to disregard the falling of their companions, and rushed about as fiercely as at first. We at length began to fear that they would remain till we were starved, for we had already expended the greater number of our arrows. Arthur at last advised that we should stop shooting, in the hope that, from some cause or other, the peccaries would raise the siege and take their departure. “Even could we cut up the slaughtered animals, we could not carry home a quarter of them, and it is evidently useless to shoot more of them,” he observed.

Arthur had turned round to speak to Tim, when I heard him whisper, “See, see! look at that creature!” Casting my eyes in the direction in which he pointed, I beheld a large jaguar stealing cautiously along towards one of the peccaries which lay wounded on the ground. We kept perfectly silent, as we hoped the jaguar would not only carry off the dying peccary, but a few of its living companions. The loud squeaks which the poor wounded peccary set up on finding itself in the claws of the savage jaguar, attracted the attention of the whole herd; but instead of running away, they rushed simultaneously towards him. He saw them coming, and lifting his victim in his jaws, he bounded off. They were not, however, to be disap-

pointed of their revenge, and away they all started in chase. We watched them with no small interest,—expecting, however, that when they found they could not overtake the jaguar they would quickly return and again lay siege to us. Greatly to our satisfaction, however, on they went.

“Now is our time ; let us run for it !” exclaimed Arthur, shouting to Tim, who speedily descended from the tree.

“Sure, you would not be after leaving such a fine supply of good pork,” said Tim, drawing his knife. “If the peccaries come back, we must just slip up our trees again ; and as for the jaguar, there’s little chance of his showing his nose here, for the brutes will soon kill him, if he has not got a fast pair of heels of his own.”

As there appeared little probability of the peccaries returning, we followed Tim’s advice, and began cutting up the animals, so as to secure the best joints from each. We soon had three as heavy loads of meat as we could carry ; and placing them on our shoulders, we set off towards the settlement looking back, every now and then to ascertain if we were followed.

We hastened along as fast as we could, as we wished not only to escape from the living peccaries, but to bring our friends to carry off a further supply of the slaughtered meat. From some cause or other we were not pursued, and arrived safely at the settlement.

Our friends immediately armed themselves with bows and arrows and spears, and got ready to return with us. Kallolo merely took his blow-pipe ; and giving a peculiar smile, he observed,—“If the creatures will kindly come near me, I will take good care that not one of them gets away.” However, on reaching the spot where we had left the slaughtered peccaries no living ones were to be seen, nor did it appear that the jaguar had come back for any of them ; so we concluded that he had either been killed, that the savage little brutes had driven him to a distance, or that he had crossed a piece of water, into which they themselves will never willingly enter. Several vultures and eagles had, however, collected to enjoy the feast we had prepared for them, while two armadillos and numerous insects had already attacked the carcasses. We found that several of those we had last killed were untouched, and each of us was able to carry back a heavy load of joints, to turn into hams and bacon in our smoking-house.

We had now, we found after taking stock of our provisions, a supply sufficient to last for our voyage to Stabroek, even though it might prove longer than we calculated on. We had jars of clay and caya-nuts to carry our stock of water, of which we did not require much, as we should not be compelled to use it till we got out of the river. As the earthen jars, however, were liable to be broken, Uncle Paul determined to

manufacture a number of india-rubber bottles. They might possibly impart an unpleasant odour to the water, but would not render it unwholesome; and this supply would serve in case the rest should be exhausted. For this purpose he made a number of clay moulds, with round sticks for the mouths, and baked them slightly. He then covered the moulds to a sufficient thickness with the seringa juice, and dried them in the smoke as our shoes had been. The moulds were easily broken; and the pieces being taken out, the india-rubber bottles were completed, only requiring corks and pieces of string to make them suitable for our object. We were thus supplied with the chief means of supporting existence during our voyage. We had dried fish and flesh, nuts and preserved fruit, rice and the farinaceous produce of the palm-tree. We were more indebted to various species of palm than to any other tree, both for fruit, and flour to supply the place of wheat.

In a spot once apparently inhabited by Indians, but long since abandoned, were several peach-palms,—tall and elegant trees, which rose to the height of sixty feet, and were perfectly straight. Each tree bore several bunches of fruit, a single bunch being as much as the strongest of our party could carry. The fruit takes its name from the colour of the peach, not from its flavour or nature, for it is dry and mealy, and we agreed, when tasting it, that it was like a mixture of

chestnuts and cheese. On boiling the fruit it became nearly as mealy as a potato. Each fruit was about the size of a large peach. We found it very nutritious; and eight or ten were as much as one of us could eat at a meal. The appearance of the tree is very beautiful, owing to the rich colour of the foliage. The leaves are green, evenly arched over and forming a deep green vault, with the heavy clusters of ripe red fruit hanging beneath it. We were attracted to the spot by seeing numerous vultures hovering over it; and on reaching the tree we found that they had come not to devour a carcass beneath, as we had supposed, but to feed on the fruit.

Another palm, the assai, afforded us an abundance of berries, about the size of a cranberry, and of a dark brown colour. From it we manufactured a refreshing beverage. The trunk is perfectly smooth, and the fruit grows in heavy clusters just below the long leaves which crown its summit. At first we thought it would be impossible to reach them, but Maco showed us how they were to be obtained. Binding his feet together by a strip of palm leaves above his instep, he pressed his knees against the trunk, and quickly ascended the polished stem, till he reached the fruit at the summit.

Although we could generally obtain as much game as we required in the immediate neighbourhood of the settlement, we occasionally made long excursions, for

the purpose of seeking for a variety. I had one day accompanied Kallolo further to the north, along the shore of the lake, than we had hitherto gone. As we were pushing our way through the forest, we unexpectedly came upon the shores of a small lake, united, as we afterwards discovered, with several other lakes of a similar size and appearance. As we stood there, concealed by the trees which thickly covered its banks, Kallolo whispered to me, "Don't move or make the slightest sound, and we will quickly capture a bird which will be highly prized by our friends." He pointed, as he spoke, to the water, on which I observed a number of enormous circular leaves floating, like vast dishes, their edges turned up all round, and with beautiful flowers rising amidst them. But what was more surprising than the leaves, was to see a large bird with long legs calmly walking over them, and, as far as I could judge, scarcely making them sink in the slightest degree in the water.

Kallolo, telling me to remain quiet, threw off his clothes, and having covered his head with a bunch of grass which he hastily plucked from the bank, he made his way amid the water towards the bird; which, standing on a leaf, was engaged in picking up aquatic insects floating by, and uttering a low-sounding "cluck, cluck" at short intervals. When the bird turned towards Kallolo, he immediately stopped; then on he went again, till he got close be-

hind it, when, suddenly darting out his hand, he seized it by its long legs and drew it quickly under water. The bird struggled in vain to free itself, and Kallolo brought it to me in triumph. It was, he told me, called the oven-bird, because it walks over those enormous leaves shaped like the pans used for baking the mandioca. I at once recognized it as the jacana. It had black plumage, with a greenish gloss; its legs were very long and slight, as were its toes and claws, especially the hind toe. The body, though it appeared large, was of a singularly light construction, so that it weighs but little when pressing on the floating leaves. Indeed, on measuring it we found that it was about ten inches long; the beak, of an orange colour, being upwards of an inch in length. We carried home our captive; but though we were anxious to keep it and tame it, it died in a few days, probably from being unable to obtain the food to which it was accustomed.

The day after this adventure I was in the woods, when I saw the grass close to me move; I started back, supposing that a serpent was crossing my path, and might spring on me. I stood prepared with my stick to strike it without any sensation of fear; indeed, no snakes need be dreaded by persons of good nerve and correct eye, if seen in time. I watched the spot, when, instead of a snake, a land-tortoise came creeping along. I immediately pounced upon it, and carried it off. It weighed, I judged, about twenty pounds.

Sambo was well-pleased at seeing it. "This is better food than any we have yet found!" he exclaimed. "If we can catch a few more, we shall have enough fresh provisions during the voyage, for they will live a long time without eating."

As it was possible that more might be found in the same spot, Sambo and Maco set off with me to hunt for them. We were more successful than we expected, for we had fallen, it appeared, on a colony of the creatures; and in a short time we captured six, of about the same size as the first. Maco said that, as they seldom move far from home, we should probably catch many more.

We returned home with a tortoise under each arm; and we had now to consider how they were to be kept. They would not remain quietly on their backs, as turtle are wont to do; for immediately they were put in that position they managed to turn over, and began to crawl away. It was therefore settled that we should build a pen in which to confine them till we were ready to sail.

We set to work at once, having in the meantime secured ropes round their bodies, and tethered them to sticks; and before night we had put up a pen of sufficient size to contain as many as we were likely to catch. As they cannot climb, the palings were of no great height; while, as the creatures require a good sized hole to get through, we were able to put

the stakes some distance apart. We at once turned in our tortoises, and gave them various fruits, all of which they ate willingly.

The tortoises made us think of turtle. Though turtle flesh is not considered by many people to equal that of the tortoise, it was very desirable that we should obtain some, as they also can be preserved a long time on board ship.

It was now about the time when they come on shore to lay their eggs, so we agreed to make an excursion along the borders of the lake, in the hope of finding some sandy beach which they might have chosen for that object. As it was a matter of importance, Uncle Paul determined to go himself on the smaller raft, taking Sambo, Kallolo, and me with him. We started at daybreak, provisioned for three days; but as Kallolo carried his blow-pipe, and we our bows and arrows, with our long pointed sticks for spears, and some fishing-lines, we could obtain more food should we require it.

We kept along the western shore of the lake towards the north, passing on our way several inlets, which led, we had no doubt, to other lakes in the interior, similar to the one in which we had caught the jacana. After we had gone some distance, no sandy beach appearing in which turtle were likely to lay their eggs, we began to despair of obtaining our object. Still Uncle Paul determined to go further. He ex-

pressed his regret that we had not built a canoe in the first instance. We might then have navigated the shores of the lake to a considerable distance ; and it would also have served us far better than the raft for fishing. However, as it would have occupied not only our time, but engaged the tools which were required for building the vessel, it had not been considered advisable to attempt the construction of one.

The wind being from the south, we glided calmly on before it. Sometimes, when the wind was fresh, we made good way ; at others, when it fell, we had again to take to our paddles.

We were thus moving forward, when Kallolo espied an object floating on the surface of the water. "Paddle slowly !" he said ; "and make as little noise as possible. There is a sleeping turtle ; and though we cannot catch it alive, we will have it notwithstanding." Saying this, he got his bow ready, with one of several large arrows which he had formed fixed in it. We had cautiously approached ; when, standing up, he shot his arrow into the air, which formed a curve and came down perpendicularly on the shell of the turtle.

"Paddle up rapidly !" he exclaimed. We did as he directed, but just as we got near it the turtle disappeared beneath the surface. The shaft of the arrow, however, remaining above it, Kallolo sprang into the water and caught it just as it was sinking, and towed

it alongside. Passing a rope round the body of the turtle, we next hauled it on board, when Kallolo, breaking off the shaft, turned the animal on its back. It was alive, but from the weak way in which it moved its legs it was evident that life was ebbing fast. We should, at all events, not return empty-handed.

We were at last thinking of putting about, when Uncle Paul, who was taking another look along the shore, announced that he saw just such a beach as we were in search of. We at once with renewed vigour paddled towards it, and as we drew nearer he declared his belief that we should find it frequented by turtle. Instead of landing on the beach, however, we paddled in on one side, and there saw an open space which would afford us camping-ground. As turtles are timid creatures, and will not lay their eggs on ground disturbed by the footsteps of their human or other foes, it was important not to walk over the ground until they had come on shore. This they do during the night, though they do not return to the water till after sunrise.

We built a hut of boughs, and lighting a fire, cooked our provisions ; then, having eaten our supper, we lay down to rest, one of us keeping watch while the rest slept.

Uncle Paul, who had chosen the morning watch, called us just before daylight. We made our way along the shore, cautiously approaching the beach, on

which, to our infinite satisfaction, we saw a number of dark objects crawling slowly along. We now hurried forward—Uncle Paul and Kallolo taking one side, Tim and I the other—and were soon among the turtle, which, with all the strength we could exert, we rapidly turned over on their backs. On seeing us, the creatures began to crawl away towards the water; but we were too quick for many of them, and in a short time had, between us, turned over twenty.

There they lay, utterly helpless and at our mercy. But what to do with them, was the first question. We could not carry them all on the raft, and if we left them, they would certainly become the prey of jaguars or alligators, and probably vultures and eagles. Indeed, the poor turtle finds, from its birth to the day of its death, innumerable enemies ready to prey on it. I, as a joke, recommended harnessing them, and letting them tow us; but Sambo observed gravely that, as we could not guide them, they were very likely to carry us off in exactly the opposite direction to that we wished to go.

As the raft, we calculated, could only carry six, we at last determined to build a pen in which to leave them, on their backs, and to cover it over with boughs, so as to protect them from the attacks of any of the foes I have mentioned. As it was only necessary to cut sticks for the purpose four or five feet long, we soon had enough prepared, with a number of the

heaviest boughs we could manage to bring to the spot. We then dragged our captives to the pen, and covered them up. People in general do not take this precaution, but then they always leave some one to watch the turned turtles till they can carry them away.

Placing the others on the raft, in high spirits we commenced our return voyage. We met with no accident by the way, and, of course, were heartily welcomed.

While we set off again, the rest of the party commenced building a pen on the shore of the lake, by driving in sticks, so as to enclose a semicircular piece of water, in which the turtles might live at their ease. And on this occasion we carried with us a number of baskets, to fill with turtles' eggs.

On reaching the spot where we had left our turtles, we found that our precautions had not been in vain. An alligator had apparently poked his nose against the sticks, but had been unable to uproot them; and one or more jaguars had certainly visited the spot, but had not succeeded in breaking through the thick roof. During the previous night more turtle had, we found, visited the spot, and we very speedily filled our baskets with eggs.

We had also brought with us a large trough and several clay jars. We broke a considerable number of eggs into the trough, filling it to the brim. In a short time a rich oil rose to the surface. This we

skimmed off and put into the jars ; repeating the process till all our jars were full. We had thus a good supply of excellent oil, for any purpose for which it might be required. Then, somewhat heavily laden, we returned homewards.

“ Well done, my friends ! you have amply provisioned the *Good Hope* ; and, please Heaven, we will in a few days get her off the stocks and ready for rigging ! ” exclaimed the skipper. “ That will not take long ; and we may then, before the rain sets in, bid farewell to this place, which we shall ever remember with affection for the happy home it has afforded us for so many months.”

We were now more busy than ever. The last planks were put on. Our craft was completely decked over, and a cabin raised in the after-part for Marian and my father. We had manufactured an ample supply of sail-cloth, which, with the addition of the sail saved from the old craft, would be sufficient. Cordage and blocks had been made, and the masts and spars were already put up. The fibres of several plants served as oakum for calking the planks ; and two or three resinous trees afforded pitch for the seams, as also for paying over the outside. As we had no paint, the interior was covered over with a varnish which quickly became hard.

The day for the launch was at last fixed. We had no gay-coloured flags, but Sambo had preserved a red

handkerchief, which was hoisted to the head of the main-mast, and waved proudly in the breeze. The sky was bright, the wind light and balmy. The shores were then knocked away; and, with loud cheers, and prayers that the *Good Hope* might have a prosperous voyage, we saw her glide gently into the waters of the lake, on which she sat, as Peter observed, like a wild duck ready to take wing. We had formed a rough pier with the trunks of two large trees, alongside of which she was hauled, for the greater facility of carrying her rigging and spars aboard. The rafts were drawn up on the other side for the same purpose—the last service they were likely to render us.

Though we had an abundance of substantial provisions, we required for our daily wants a supply of fruit and vegetables, as also some wild-fowl and other birds. For the purpose of obtaining them, Kallolo and I set out one morning, each of us carrying a large basket on our back; he with his blow-pipe in his hand, and I with my bow in mine, and our pointed sticks, without which we never went out. We took the way towards the small lakes, where we were certain to find birds, and probably a variety of fruits, as so bountifully is that land supplied by nature, that some fruits are found in perfection all the year round, though we had to go further than usual to obtain them.

We reached the lake where Kallolo had caught the

jacana ; and skirting its shore, we passed along a narrow causeway which separated it from another lake of smaller dimensions. We were still proceeding, when Kallolo stopped me, and pointed to a thin column of smoke which arose at some distance, apparently from a fire kindled close to the shore.

"There must be natives there," he whispered ; "but whether they are likely to prove friends or foes, I cannot say till I have got a sight of them. Stop here while I wade into the lake ; I see by the character of the water-plants that it is shallow, and by keeping behind the bushes I may observe them without being seen myself."

He did as he proposed, and, while I remained hidden behind the bushes, made his way, now swimming, now wading, towards the opening where he had seen the smoke. I watched him anxiously. He stopped, at length, resting his hand on a fallen trunk, and looking out eagerly before him ; while I kept an arrow fixed in my bow, ready to shoot should the strangers discover him. Slowly sinking down, so as the more effectually to conceal himself, he made his way towards where I anxiously awaited his return. I saw by the caution he used that he was not satisfied.

"We must hurry away from hence," he whispered. "I saw a large number of people ; and, from their paint and the weapons they carry, I have no doubt that they are out on a warlike expedition. They pro-

bably are not aware that we are in the neighbourhood, and they may pass by without discovering us; but if they do so, and find how few we are in number, they may be tempted to attack us, under the belief that we possess such articles as they value."

Kallolo said this as we hurried away. We were soon out of sight of the strangers, but he considered it imprudent to remain in their vicinity; and although we had collected only a portion of the fruit for which we had come, and killed but a few birds, we hurried back to the village.

The account we gave made every one more anxious than ever to get the vessel ready for sea without delay, so that, should the natives attack us, we might, as we had no adequate means of defence, hurry on board and push off into the lake, even though the rigging of the craft was not complete. All hands therefore worked away till darkness put an end to our labours. Kallolo and Maco then volunteered to go out as scouts, to ascertain if the strangers were approaching, that we might not be taken by surprise.

The night, however, passed away as usual; and next morning, as soon as daylight returned we were all on foot—the seamen of the party engaged in rigging the vessel, while the rest of us carried provisions on board. Marian took her share in all our labours, as she had done in manufacturing the sails, the matting for making the baskets, and even the

ropes, and in preparing the provisions. We were all, indeed, as busy as ants, going backwards and forwards from the store-house to the vessel. The last of the provisions carried on board were the turtles and tortoises. The former were laid on their backs on deck, covered with a piece of matting; and the latter were shut up in a box formed for them in the hold.

Another day came to an end, and the Indians, as before, went out to act the part of scouts. On their return they brought the intelligence that the strangers had kept on the other side of the lake, and would, they supposed, pass at a distance from the settlement. However, as we could not be certain that this would be the case, it was agreed that it would be wise to keep a sharp look-out as long as we remained on shore.

We had now only to bend the sails. All who were required were engaged in the work, while the rest were employed in conveying on board the last remaining articles. Polo, who, never having been at sea, was the least handy on board, had gone a short distance from the huts to shoot some parrots from a flock which frequented the neighbourhood, and which had already supplied us with several of their number. They were to be cooked, with the flesh of one of the turtles, before we embarked, as our culinary appliances on board were limited. We had contrived a stove made of clay, but, as it was of small dimensions, it would only serve for boiling our kettle and preparing small

dishes. I was assisting Marian to pack up some food for her favourites, which were standing around her : the ara parrot perched on her shoulder, the curassow running round and picking up the grain which I let drop, while Quacko was seated on the roof of her hut, munching a nut. My father and Arthur were engaged in some other way ; and Tim had just got a load on his shoulders, when, hearing a shout, we looked round and saw Polo running at full speed towards us.

“Fly ! fly ! Hasten, my masters ; escape for your lives !” he exclaimed in eager tones. “The enemy have caught sight of me, and are following. There are hundreds of them ; and they will destroy us all, if they catch us !”

Though I was at first inclined to believe that there could scarcely be so much cause for Polo’s alarm, yet I saw that my father and Arthur considered the matter in a serious light.

“Guy, my boy, go at once on board with Marian. Arthur and I will follow,” cried my father.

Captain van Dunk, hearing Polo’s shouts, inquired what was the matter. Polo repeated what he had said to us. “We will shove off at once, then,” exclaimed the skipper. “If the people approaching prove friendly, we can return and get whatever remains. As prudent people, we should not longer delay.”

I took Marian’s hand, and followed by our feathered

pets and a couple of young monkeys in addition to Quacko, we hastened along the stage to the *Good Hope*. Having seen her safe on board, I was about to return and assist in bringing the few things which remained, when I caught sight of a number of dusky forms in the distance, a bristling array of bows and spears being visible above their heads. The captain shouted to my father and the rest to hasten their steps, while those on board got out some long poles prepared for impelling the vessel when in shallow water.

The shouts of the savages rang through the forest. It was very evident that we had been discovered, and that they intended to attack us. My father and Arthur came hurrying to the beach ; Maco came next, bearing a load ; and Tim, who seemed to consider it a duty to remain till the last for the defence of his master, brought up the rear. There was no time to be lost. The captain and Peter stretched out their hands to help them on board ; and no sooner had Tim leaped on the deck than the last warp was cast off, and the *Good Hope* began to move into deep water. At that moment our poor tapir, which had been feeding at a safe distance, came trotting down to the beach. He could not under any circumstances have been taken on board, as from his bulk and weight he would have been too much in the way ; but we were very sorry to leave him behind, especially when we saw him wading into the lake till his head alone appeared above water.

Our attention, however, was occupied in watching the savages, who now, in overwhelming numbers, came rushing into the midst of our little village. On finding that we had escaped, they hurried down to the beach, uttering loud shrieks and cries, and ordering us to return ; while some, drawing their bows, shot their arrows towards us. This, of course, increased our anxiety to escape from them ; so the oars were got out and we pulled lustily away, till a light breeze getting up, we hoisted our sail, and the *Good Hope* began to glide rapidly across the smooth waters of the lake.

On looking back we saw the natives shooting their arrows towards us, and frantically waving their spears ; while behind them rose a volume of smoke above the bright flames which were consuming our little village. I could not help fearing that they had vented their rage on the poor tapir, which could scarcely have had time to regain the shore before they reached it. Our huts, too, must have been completely consumed ; but as we stood across the lake a point of land shut out for ever our little settlement from our eyes.

CHAPTER XVI.

OUR PETS—THE GALE—THE SKIPPER'S VEXATION—ALARMING INTELLIGENCE—
THE CHASE—OUR PURSUERS ON SHORE—WE REACH STABROEK—WELCOME
INTELLIGENCE—OUR RETURN TO TRINIDAD—MY FATHER'S DEATH—CON-
CLUSION.



WE glided slowly across the lake during the night, and at early dawn came in sight of the entrance of a broad passage, which our good captain believed would lead us through a chain of lakes into the river by which we had come. The wind favoured us, and either the captain or his mate were continually sounding with long poles, to avoid the risk of running on any hidden sand-bank which might lie in our course.

The appearance of the banks was greatly changed : long grass and shrubs grew on spots before concealed by water ; small islands covered with vegetation were seen where we had supposed no land existed. Navigation, therefore, was extremely difficult, and the greatest caution was necessary to escape running on shore. Still, the depth of water was considerable, so that we had no fear of being stopped by impassable sand-banks or shoals. In several places which had before been

overspread by the water we saw native huts, with the inhabitants—who gazed at us with astonishment as we passed—collected round them. Some followed us in canoes, but ignorant that we were not possessed of firearms, they kept at a distance. Occasionally a few Indians came off to trade, bringing tortoises and fruit ; but as we would not allow them on board, they did not discover our defenceless condition ; and we took good care to hide our bows and arrows, which would have made them suspect that we had no firearms.

We were somewhat closely packed on board the little vessel, what with twelve human beings, three monkeys, the curassow, the macaw, two parrots and three parrakeets—one with a yellow top-knot, who, from his manners, showed that he considered himself the chief of the party, and deserving of the most attention ; then there were ten turtles and a number of tortoises. The turtles, however, were stowed in the hold, and served as ballast. Quacko and the parrots afforded us constant amusement. The former generally took up his seat on the roof of the cabin, in front of the parrots, whose perches were fixed upon it. Arthur, Marian, and I took infinite pains to improve their manners and teach them all sort of tricks, so that they might be fit, as Marian observed, to appear in civilized society.

Though we had been very happy during our long sojourn in the wilds of the Orinoco, the elders of the

party especially looked forward with satisfaction to reaching a place where we could live without fear of attack from savages, anacondas, or wild beasts, and where we could hear what was going on in the world. Marian and I agreed, however, that we should have been very happy to have remained on at our settlement as long as our friends liked to stay.

We now and then, I must confess, had some difficulty in keeping our pets in order. They had got on very well on shore, but in the close contact to which they were subjected on board their tempers were somewhat tried, and Uncle Paul suggested that we should take immediate steps for the setting up of family government. Jack, the macaw, though he had been placed on the highest perch as a post of honour, was continually climbing down to quarrel with the parrots, and creating a fearful hubbub with his hoarse screaming; while the parrots fought desperately over their food. One day they and the macaw, while wrangling together, in the blindness of their anger tumbled overboard; and had not Sambo jumped into the water and hauled them out, they would have all three been drowned, or fallen into the maw of some ravenous alligator. The parrakeets were as quarrelsome as their larger brethren—yellow-top considered himself quite as good as a dozen green ones; while they, with their loud screeches, created such a disturbance that the skipper sometimes threatened to send

them on shore, where they might settle their disputes by themselves. Sometimes the three parrakeets would band together, and trotting up and down would insult the parrots. When a flock of their relatives passed over the vessel, the whole feathered community would set up so terrific a scream, that it might have been heard by every bird within the circuit of a mile. The curassow was the best behaved of the party. When her meals were over she would sit for hours together at Marian's feet, who was diligently endeavouring to repair some of her worn-out garments, so as to appear respectable on her arrival. Crass made herself very useful, also, in eating up the flies and other insects which came on board.

At length we reached the main stream of the Orinoco, down which we glided rapidly with the current. We were not, however, destined to perform our voyage without further adventures. The weather, hitherto fine, suddenly changed, and a strong wind got up, which blew in our teeth. It increased to a gale, which sorely tried the little craft, and threatened to tear our sails into ribbons. Happily a deep bay, or the mouth of a river or igarape, appeared on our starboard hand; and running into it we found shelter beneath a lofty bank, where there was deep water close to the shore. Recollecting our former escape, we could not help fearing that, should the wind change, we might meet with a similar accident. We had, I should

have said, an anchor made of very heavy, hard wood, weighted with stones bound on by stout ropes. It was, as may be supposed, an unwieldy and ugly affair ; and, as we could not have carried another, we had to be very careful not to lose it.

The wind howled and the tall trees waved above our heads, but we lay secure ; the only risk being from some giant of the forest, which, uprooted, might come crashing down upon our deck, or from some big limb torn off. But as there was not much probability of such an occurrence, we remained where we were, hoping that it might not happen. As the gale gave no signs of abating, our three Indians swam on shore, Kallolo with his blow-pipe, and the other two with their bows, to kill some game. After safely landing, they were soon lost to sight amid the trees.

The skipper would allow no one else to go. "It will not be wise to be left short-handed, in case anything should happen," he observed. "We know not what may occur."

As we saw no signs of inhabitants, we did not expect to be visited either by friends or foes ; still, had the latter appeared, they might have been tempted to come on board from seeing but few people on the vessel's deck.

Night came on, and the Indians not having returned, we began at length to grow anxious about them. The gale had not abated, and we thought

that, knowing we should not move, they had been induced to go further than they had intended. They would not desert us—of that we were very sure ; indeed, both Kallolo and Maco had their families residing in the neighbourhood of Stabroek, and were anxious to return to them. Half of our party kept watch at night, while the rest lay down, ready to start up in a moment.

Towards morning the wind began to decrease, and the skipper did not conceal his vexation at the non-appearance of the Indians. "If the wind becomes fair, we must sail and leave them behind," he exclaimed. "They ought to have known better than to go so far away."

Uncle Paul, however, tried to excuse them, and expressed his belief that they would not intentionally have delayed returning. "The wind has not yet gone down or changed," he said ; "and as we cannot possibly sail, Kallolo, who knows this, sees that it is not absolutely necessary to return. Let us wait patiently ; they will come back before long."

The sun arose ; the clouds dispersed, but still the wind blew against us. After an hour or more had passed, however, on looking out we perceived that the tree-tops no longer waved ; and on glancing across the river we found that its surface, hitherto broken into foaming waves, had become perfectly calm.

"The wind is about to change, and we ought to

have been out of this place," exclaimed the skipper. "We must get up the anchor and row off into the channel. The fellows will have a longer swim, that's all."

"You would not desert them, surely," said Uncle Paul.

"Well, I should be sorry to do so. We will wait a bit, and see if they come. I nope nothing has happened to the poor men," said the kind-hearted skipper, who had never really intended to leave the Indians behind, and whose anger had now given way to anxiety on their account. He even proposed sending Sambo on shore to try and discover what had become of them; but Uncle Paul dissuaded him from this, as, had they been taken prisoners, or got into any other difficulty, the black would run a great risk of sharing their fate. Still we delayed. At last the skipper, with a sigh, exclaimed, "We must get up the anchor, Peter; the poor fellows would have come back before this if they were coming at all."

Uncle Paul no longer made any objections. We shortened in the cable, but it required all our strength to haul up the ponderous anchor. We had managed to lift it out of its oozy bed, when we heard a shout, and looking up we saw the three natives rushing through the forest. Without stopping for a moment they dashed into the water. As they swam off they called out to us to heave them ropes. They were

quickly alongside ; and even before they had scrambled on board Kallolo cried out, "Get under way! get under way! No time to be lost!"

"That's just what we were about to do," said the skipper ; "but why, after keeping us so long, are you in so great a hurry?"

"We could not help the delay ; but there's no time to be lost. We will tell you all about it presently. Get under way! get under way!" repeated Kallolo.

As he spoke, he and his companions sprang forward to assist in hoisting up and securing the anchor. The oars were then got out, and the vessel's head was so directed that she might get round the point of land which had served to shelter us. The sails were in the meantime loosed, so as to sheet home as soon as they filled. Kallolo and the other Indians were pulling so lustily at the oars, that they had no time to tell us what had happened ; but I saw them looking anxiously up the river.

As we got out into the stream, clear of the long point which had hitherto concealed the upper part of the river from our view, we saw a large vessel under all sail standing down towards us. Her appearance was sufficient to account for their alarm. There could be no doubt that she was Spanish, and that, should she overtake us, we should be captured and carried to their settlement of Angostura ; where we should certainly be thrown into prison, and very probably lose

our lives. As might be supposed, we all pulled away with redoubled efforts, till we made the long oars crack. Fortunately the Spaniard had but little wind, and we were well able to keep ahead of her; but should a breeze come she would probably get it first, and bring it up with her, and too probably overtake us.

“Courage, my friends! courage!” exclaimed the brave skipper. “The *Good Hope* is not captured yet. She will prove no laggard, depend on that, and may have as fast a pair of heels as our enemy.”

We turned our eyes anxiously at the vessel astern. It was possible that those on board might not suspect who we were, and that she might be only sailing down the river without the intention of chasing us. Still, should she come up with the *Good Hope*, they would certainly send on board and discover that we were foreigners, who had, according to their notions, no business to be in the Orinoco.

At length we saw a light wind was playing across the stream, and our sails were rigged out. It came right aft. Away we flew, the canvas of the Spaniard filling at the same time. On and on we sped, but the Spaniard seemed to move through the water fully as fast. Kallolo now told us how, after having had a successful hunt, he and his companions were returning on the previous evening, expecting to get on board before nightfall, when they found themselves on the opposite side of the bay. Suddenly a party of white men,

whom they took to be hunters, sprang out on them and made them prisoners. The strangers had seen the *Good Hope*, and had managed to draw from them the information that those on board were English and Dutch. On hearing this, their captors had despatched two of their party up the river, where a Spanish guardacosta lay at anchor. They pretended to be very indifferent as to what had happened ; and the Spaniards, who in reality belonged to the vessel, were thrown off their guard. During the night Kallolo and his companions managed to make their escape, and finding no canoe in which to cross the bay, had hastened round by the shore to warn us of our danger. It was now clear that the Spanish vessel was following us with hostile intentions, and that should she overtake us we might suffer the fate we apprehended.

But "a stern chase is a long chase," and the *Good Hope* proved herself a fast little craft. As she drew but a few feet of water, we were able to keep a straight course, whereas the larger vessel had to deviate from hers several times ; thus by nightfall we had drawn considerably ahead.

On the previous night we had slept but little ; this night not one of us closed our eyes. We could just see the lofty sails of the Spaniard gliding after us like some ferocious giant eager for our destruction. The wind increased, and she was evidently making more rapid way. On and on she came. Presently the loud

sound of a piece of ordnance boomed through the night air, and the shot splashed into the water close astern of us.

"A miss is as good as a mile," said the skipper, who was at the helm, in his usual quiet tone. "We will not give in, though a dozen such pop-guns as she carries should be fired at us."

Another shot came whistling past our quarter, and dropped alongside; a third came, and that fell astern.

"We passed over some shallow water just now," said Peter, who was sounding with a pole.

"Ah, and the Spaniard too has found out that the water is shallow. See! see! she's on shore!" exclaimed the skipper.

As we looked astern we saw that the vessel chasing us had let all her sails fly. On we glided. She grew fainter and fainter, till we could barely distinguish her outline. We all began to breathe more freely. In less than half an hour we could no longer discern her. We stood on, and when the sun rose right ahead no sail was in sight.

The weather continued fine, and in a few days the *Good Hope* was rising buoyantly on the ocean wave, her head directed to the southward.

Stabroek was soon reached, and our brave skipper, who was well-known there, introduced us to his friends, to whom he recounted our adventures, and secured us a warm reception.

I must not stop to describe our stay at the capital of the then Dutch colony of Guiana. My father at length received news from Trinidad which once more raised his drooping spirits. An enlightened naval officer, Don Josef Chacon, had been appointed governor. He had expelled the dissolute monks, and abolished the Inquisition; besides granting fertile lands to new colonists, assisting them with cattle and implements of husbandry, and providing for the free exercise of mercantile affairs. We might return in safety. We accordingly forthwith embarked on board a vessel commanded by our good friend Captain van Dunk, and arrived safely in the colony. Doctor Antonio had administered my father's affairs with honesty and wisdom, and at once delivered over his estate to him, refusing to receive more than a very moderate recompense for the services he had rendered.

Our affairs flourished, but my father never entirely recovered his health. In a very few years he died, and was buried by the side of our poor mother. Uncle Paul had never lost his affection for our beloved Pennsylvania, nor had Arthur or I; so at my father's death we disposed of our property in Trinidad, which realized not only sufficient to pay off all my father's liabilities, but to secure the means for carrying on a mercantile business in our native land.

Years have passed since then. The battle for independence has been fought and won. Marian long ago

became Arthur's bride ; and I have a wife of my own, who, although she has never stirred out of her native land, knows as much about our adventures as we do. Uncle Paul remained a bachelor to the end of his days, with Sambo as his attendant ; and faithful Tim, who married a fair daughter of Erin from the "ould country," refusing to quit us, still remains in our service ; while Captain van Dunk, who entered the American navy, after ploughing the seas for many a year has settled down on a farm near us, where he ploughs the land with the same energy and perseverance he ever exhibited. Of course, as may be supposed, Marian and I often narrate to our children the adventures we met with "in the wilds of Trinidad and the Orinoco."

THE END.

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